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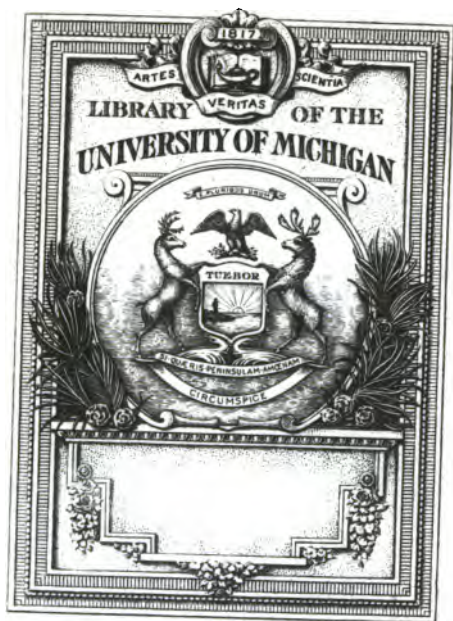
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L'ÉVANGÉLISTE

A Parisian novel.

BY

ALPHONSE DAUDET

Translated by

MARY NEAL SHERWOOD



PHILADELPHIA

T.B. PETERSON & BROTHERS

( 1883 )



DEDICATION.

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TO THE ELOQUENT AND LEARNED PROFESSOR,

J. M. CHARCOT,

PHYSICIAN OF "LA SALPÊTRIÈRE,"

I DEDICATE THIS "OBSERVATION."

A. D.





94t  
Dr. & M. Scott  
12-17-28

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# L'ÉVANGÉLISTE.

BY ALPHONSE DAUDET.

AUTHOR OF "SIDONIE," "JACK," "THE NABOB," "LITTLE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING,"  
"NUMA ROUMESTAN," "KINGS IN EXILE," ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY MARY NEAL SHERWOOD.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GRANDMOTHER.

THEY had returned from the cemetery at twilight to a little house in La Rue du Val-de-Grace. They had just buried their grandmother. The door had closed upon their friends, and they were left alone in the small home where every trifle recalled the one who had left them, and where Madame Ebsen and her daughter realized the full measure of their sorrow.

Even at Montparnasse, when the earth opened and swallowed her they loved—they had not felt how irreparable was their loss nor the anguish of the eternal separation as keenly as now in the presence of that

empty chair. It was as if grandmother had died a second time.

Madame Ebsen sank upon a chair crushed and motionless, the folds of her woolen mourning dress falling around her. She had not strength even to remove her shawl and her hat, on which a stiff crape veil rose in sharp points around her large kindly face, all swollen with tears. Wiping her eyes energetically, she at last began to enumerate in a loud voice all the virtues of her who had gone—her goodness, her gayety, her courage, and told so many episodes of her own life and that of her daughter, that a stranger admitted to this scene would have learned the entire history of the family. He would have heard how Monsieur Ebsen, an engineer of Copenhagen, ruined by his inventions, came to Paris twenty years before to obtain a patent for an electric clock which had never gone as was desired—and how the inventor died, leaving his wife alone with the old mother, and so poor that she did not know what was to become of her in her confinement.

Ah! without grandmother then, what would have been done?—without grandmother and her brave little crochet needle which she made fly day and night working hand *guipure*, which at that time was little known in Paris, and which the old dame went bravely forth to sell at the shops.

In this way she kept the house going and got a good nurse for little Eline—but those circles of fine lace injured her eyes. Dear, dear grandmother!

And here Madame Ebsen's voice was broken by

sobs. She resumed her narration, using childish phrases which returned to the good woman with her grief as an orphan, and to which the foreign accent—the heavy French of Copenhagen, uncorrected by twenty years of life in Paris—imparted a certain something that was very touching.

The daughter's grief was less expansive. Very pale, with teeth firmly set, Eline busied herself about the house—with slow, gentle and yet decided movements, her full and elastic form draped in heavy black which brought out the tints of her fair luxuriant hair and all the beauty of her eighteen years.

Noiselessly, with the skill of a clean manager, she opened the fire that had been covered for their long absence, drew the curtains, lighted the lamp, and rescued the little salon from the cold and the darkness they had found on coming in. While her mother still talked, she removed Madame Ebsen's shawl and veil, brought warm slippers and took away the boots damp and heavy with the mold from the cemetery, and then led her to a table where stood a smoking soup tureen and two d'shes brought from a restaurant. Madame Ebsen resisted at first. Eat! why should she eat? She was not hungry; then, at the sight of this little table, she missed the third place.

"No—Lina, I cannot!"

"Yes, yes, you must!"

Eline had determined to dine there this first evening and to permit no change in their usual habits, knowing that they would be harder to resume the next day. And she had done well, this gentle, sensible Lina!

The warmth of the fire and the cheerful light of the lamp at last penetrated this poor troubled heart. As always happens after a crisis of this kind, Madame Ebsen ate with a ravenous appetite, and by degrees her thoughts, without changing their direction, became less bitter and distressing.

She was sure that everything had been done to make grandmother happy, and that she had never wanted for anything. Then, too, what a comfort it was at such a dreadful time, to feel that one was surrounded with so much sympathy! How many people there were in the procession! The whole street was in black. Her old pupils, Léonie d'Arlot, the Baronne Gerspach, Paule and Louise de Lostande were all there.

Then there was what riches could not obtain—a discourse from Pastor Aussandon—the Dean of the Faculty of Theology—Aussandon, the great orator of the Reformed Church, who had not been heard in Paris for fifteen years. How beautiful what he had said of the family, how deeply he was moved when he spoke of that brave grandmother, expatriating herself, old as she was, to follow her children, never to leave them for a day.

"No! not for a day," sighed Madame Ebsen, from whom the remembrance of these words from the Pastor elicited new tears. And taking in her arms her daughter, who had gone to her side and was trying to calm her, she embraced her fondly, saying, "Let us love each other well, Linette—we must never be separated."

Leaning against her and pressing a long kiss on her mother's gray hair, Eline answered tenderly, but in a low voice, for she was struggling to restrain her tears, "Never! you know that, dear mother."

The warmth, the dinner and the nights without sleep and many tears, had done their work. Madame slept. Eline went and came without noise—removed the dishes and arranged the house which this terrible and sudden departure had disorganized.

She was in the habit of dulling her sorrow by activity. But when she reached the deep window, where the curtains were never drawn, where the old lady sat all day long, her heart failed her. She could not remove all these trifles which indicated the habits of her who was gone, and the trembling fingers of her who had used them—the scissors, the spectacles taken from their case and lying between the leaves of a volume of Andersen, the crochet needle passed through a bit of work lying in the half open drawer of the table and the lace cap with its violet strings hanging on the shutter.

Eline stood still.

All her childhood was associated with this corner. It was here that her grandmother had taught her to read and sew. While Madame Ebsen was out, busy in giving her lessons in German, little Lina sat at the feet of the old Dame, who talked to her of her own country and related the legends of the North and sang her the sea song of "King Christian," for her husband had been captain of a ship.

Later, when Eline earned her bread in her turn, it



was here that she still installed herself when she came in, and her grandmother continued to talk to her with the same protecting tenderness. In the last few years, as the mind of the dear old lady began to weaken a little, she often confounded her daughter with her grandchild, and calling Lina, Elizabeth—the name of Madame Ebsen—talked to her of her dead husband, thus entangling two personalities which in her heart were one and indivisible—a double maternity.

A word brought her back. Then she would laugh. Ah! that delightful laugh, that child-like ripple from under that cap. It was all over now. Eline would never hear it again. At this thought the girl lost all courage.

Her tears, which she had restrained all that day because of her mother, and also through a certain delicacy of feeling which made it difficult for her to show any emotion in the presence of all these people, now burst forth. With bitter, choking sobs she fled into the next room.

Here the window was thrown wide open, the damp air coming in, in little gusts, the clear March moonlight falling on the unmade bed, the extinguished candles, and on the two chairs still opposite each other where the coffin had stood that morning during the address of the pastor, which, in accordance with the Lutheran rite, was given in the house.

There was no disorder in this room, nothing of those surroundings which indicate the horrors of a long illness. Grandmother, who never entered it except to sleep, had found there only a more profound slumber,

a longer night, that was all. She did not like this room—"it was dreary," she said. It was heavy with silence, that silence which is the enemy of the old. And from it she could see only trees, the garden of Monsieur Aussandon, and beyond, that of the deaf mutes and the clock tower of Saint Jacques-du-Haut-Pas—nothing but verdure against gray stones, the great charm of Paris, but this Danish woman had preferred her little corner which overlooked the life of the street. Eline was soothed by the sight of the sky over which clouds were driven by the fierce March wind. In some places it looked like the sea lashed into white foam. At this open window the girl's sorrow was soothed. It seemed to her that it was hence that the dear life had taken its way, and her earnest eyes questioned the clouds and the pale rifts in the heavens.

"Mother, are you there? Do you see me?"

In a low voice she called to her grandmother, and addressed her in the form of a prayer for some time. Then the hour sounded from Saint Jacques and Val-de-Grace, the leafless trees shivered in the north wind, a locomotive whistled above the perpetual roar of Paris.

Eline left the balcony where she had been kneeling, closed the casement and returned to the room where her mother was still sleeping, an occasional childish sob shaking her from head to foot. And looking down on this good face, wrinkled with kindliness and swollen with tears, Lina thought of the devotion of this excellent woman and of the heavy burden she had so valiantly and even joyously carried—a child to bring up, a house to carry on—all a man's responsibilities, and never an angry word or a complaint.

The young girl's heart swelled with tenderness and gratitude; she would devote herself to her mother always, and once again she said to herself that she would love her faithfully and never leave her.

There was a gentle knock at the door. It was a little girl, seven or eight years of age, wearing a scholar's black apron; her smooth hair tied almost in front by a light ribbon.

"Is that you, Fanny?" said Eline, going to the door for fear that Madame Ebsen would be disturbed; "there is no lesson to-night."

"Oh! I know that, Mademoiselle." And the child cast a curious glance toward the grandmother's place to see how things are when any one is dead. "I know that, but papa wanted me to come up, to kiss you because of your great grief."

"Oh! you are very sweet."

And Lina took the child's head between her two hands and kissed her with real tenderness.

"Good night, little Fanny; you must come back to-morrow. Wait until I light you down, for the staircase is very dark."

And leaning over the stairs and holding the lamp high up that the little girl might see her way to the rooms below, she saw some one standing in the shadow.

"Is that you, Monsieur Lorie?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, it is I. Make haste, Fanny." And timidly, with his eyes lifted toward this fair young girl whose hair made a halo under the lamp, he explained in a long involved phrase that he had not

ventured to intrude with his condolences himself, then suddenly laying aside this commonplace solemnity, he added:

“I feel your trouble very truly, Mademoiselle Eline.”

“Thanks, Monsieur Lorie.”

He took the child by the hand, Eline returned to her room, and the two doors—one on each floor—closed at the same moment as if impelled by the same emotion.

## CHAPTER II.

## A FUNCTIONARY.

THESE Lories had been for some five or six months living in this house in the Rue du Val-de-Grace, and in this country-looking street with its gossips standing at the doors, its convent walls overtopped by high trees, its pavements where dogs, cats and pigeons moved about without any fear of carriages, the excitement and curiosity caused by the arrival of this strange family had not yet died away.

One October morning, under a driving rain, they made their appearance—the man tall, and dressed in black with crape on his hat, and, although still young, looking much older on account of his serious air and a mouth half hidden by administrative whiskers. With him were two children, one a boy about twelve years old, wearing a sailor hat with a glazed brim and a gilt anchor, and a little girl who held the hand of a nurse in a Berrichonne cap, who was dressed all in black like the others, and as burned and tanned by the sun as were the children. A dray from the railroad followed, loaded with boxes, bundles and trunks.

“And the furniture?” asked the *concierge*, as she showed the strangers to their rooms. The Berrichonne answered calmly, “There is none.” And as the quar-

ter's rent was paid in advance, it was necessary to be contented with this reply.

"Where did they sleep? What did they eat? And what did they sit upon?" These were enigmas which it was difficult to solve, as the door was rarely opened and the blinds were always drawn on the street and the garden.

It was not from Monsieur, severe and rigid, buttoned up to his chin in his long coat, that one could expect any details; besides, he was never there. He went away in the morning very early with a leather portfolio under his arm, and did not return until night. As to the tall, strong girl who served them she had a certain air—a certain fashion—of turning her back on any one who was guilty of an indiscreet question, which kept everybody at a distance.

When they went out the boy walked just in front of her, the little girl clung to her skirts, and when she went to the lavatory bearing her bundle of linen on her robust hip, she shut the children into their room and locked the door.

These people received no visitors, except that two or three times in the week a little man wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat, something like that of a sailor, and with bright eyes set deep in a brown face, and always carrying a large basket in his hand, appeared at the door.

In short, of these new comers nothing was known, except that the gentleman was named Lorie-Dufresne, as a visiting card nailed to the door denoted.

CHARLES LORIE-DUFRESNE,

*Sub-Préfect of Cherrhell,*

PROVINCE OF ALGIERS.

The last lines were written with a pen, and as if reluctantly.

He had just been recalled, under the following circumstances: Appointed to Algeria toward the end of the Empire, Lorie-Dufresne had expected, owing to his distance from the scene of action, to be retained under the new *régime*. His convictions were not especially firm—no more so than those of our other functionaries—and he was quite ready to give to the Republic the same proofs of zeal that he had given to the Empire, provided he could retain his post.

Life is very agreeable in a delightful climate with a palace for a sub-préfecture, with its gardens filled with bananas and oranges, terraced down to the sea, with chaouchs and spahis under his orders, whose long red mantles floated out at each movement like flaming wings—with saddle and carriage horses furnished by the government because of the great distances to be travelled. All this, we must admit, was well worth some sacrifice of opinion.

Lorie did not see his position threatened until after the departure of MacMahon; but at that time he escaped, thanks to his new Préfect, Monsieur Chemineau. This Chemineau, formerly a lawyer of Bourges, crafty and cold, ten years older than himself, had been to Lorie-Dufresne, ther Conseiller de Préfecture, the ideal type that young men adopt in beginning life, and

on which they fashion themselves almost unconsciously at the age when it is necessary to copy some one. He twisted his handsome face, adopted an air of superhuman gravity, and even to the discreet smile, the cut of the whiskers, and the way he dangled his eyeglass on the end of his finger, he was the repetition of Monsieur Chemineau.

Long afterward, when they were together in Algiers, Chemineau saw in him the image of his own youth, but with a frankness and honesty in the expression of his face which that of the Préfect had never known. It was to this resemblance, flattering as it was, that Lorie undoubtedly owed the protection of this old bachelor, who was as dry and as inexorable as the stamped paper on which he formerly wrote out his legal proceedings.

Unfortunately, after some years at Cherchell, Madame Lorie fell ill, one of those cruel feminine ailments which sap the very sources of life, and which in her case was developed quickly in this hot climate where everything ferments and grows with appalling vigor.

It was necessary to return to France, to an atmosphere which might prolong for some time and possibly save a life so precious to a whole family. Lorie wished to ask for an exchange, but the Préfect prevented his doing so. "You are forgotten," he said, "to write is to extend your neck to the executioner. Be patient a little longer and when I have passed through the water I will help you over."

The poor wife departed alone and took shelter at Amtse in Lorraine with some far away cousins. She



could not have her children with her because the old people never having had any, detested them, and feared having them in their small orderly mansion as much as if they had been a cloud of grasshoppers or some other mischievous insects. It was necessary that she should resign herself to the separation. The opportunity of living in this delightful climate with relatives who would take her to board with them at a much lower rate than at a hotel was too desirable to be thrown over, and after all it would not be for long. Chemineau was not the man to rust in Algiers, "and I shall pass over the water with him," said Lorie-Dufresne, recalling the words of his chief. Months slipped away thus. The invalid wife became desperate without her husband and her children, and wild with the idiotic teasings of her host and the acute progress of her disease. Every week despairing letters, in which the wail was always the same "my husband, my children," were borne over the sea and made the poor sub-Préfect each mail day tremble as he watched the packet from France making its way into the harbor.

At a last appeal more supplicating than the others he came to a sudden decision and embarked for Paris in order to make a personal application to the Minister, a step which seemed to him less dangerous than a letter. He could speak and defend himself. Then too it is always easier to sign a sentence of death than to pronounce it in the face of a condemned man. Lorie had reasoned well. The Minister was an excellent man whom politics had not yet chilled to the marrow of his bones, and who was therefore deeply touched by

this little family history that had wandered into his pile of ambitious papers. "Go back to Cherebell, my dear Monsieur Lorie," he said, "at the very first change your matters shall be attended to."

How happy was the sub-Préfet as he rushed through the gate of the Place Beauvau, and leaping into the first cab drove in haste to catch the express for Lorraine. But the arrival at the Gailletons' was less gay.

His wife welcomed him lying on the couch from which she now never stirred. She lay there watching the great tower of the Château of Amboise in all its massive darkness before her weary eyes. She was sad as an imprisoned captive. She lived no longer with the Gailletons, but near them in the cottage of the peasant who took care of their vineyard.

As the illness of Madame Lorie increased, Madame Gailleton dreaded for her shining floors and her furniture, the constant wear and tear of a sick room, the stains of tisanes and of the oil of the night lamps. From dawn until night the old woman went about with her feather duster, her brush and her lump of wax, leading the life of a *frotteur*, always dishevelled and out of breath and half the time on her knees in a hideous green petticoat. Her one idea was to keep her little house fresh and clean. It was the type of a Touraine home, as bright and gay as possible, with a geranium at each window looking like a red cockade.

The husband himself was mad about his garden, and as he conducted the sub-Préfet to his invalid wife he bade him remark the military stiffness of

the borders, where all the flowers were as shining as if Madame had just brushed them off with her feather duster. "You see, cousin," he said, "it would never do to have children here. Everything would be ruined at once. But we must hasten on, you will find your wife changed."

Yes, changed and very pale, with great hollows in her cheeks and her poor frail form smaller and slighter under the long loose robe; but Lorie did not at first see all this, for the joy of seeing her dear husband again had brought roses to her cheeks as bright as those he had seen there when she was but twenty.

When Gailleton returned to his garden what an embrace was theirs. At last she had him there, she would have died if she could not have embraced some one. And the children—Fanny, Maurice? Did Sylvanire, their nurse, take good care of them? They must have grown a great deal. Was it not cruel in these people that they would not allow her to have even little Fanny? Then in a whisper, for she heard Gailleton's rake under the window, she said:

"Oh! take me away, take me away! I cannot bear it! If you knew how dreary it was here, and how that great tower suffocates me. It seems sometimes that it prevents me from seeing you!"

She told of the selfishness, the sulkiness of these people if the money for her board arrived a day late, of how the sugar and the bread was doled out to her, and how the big hands of the peasant hurt her as he carried her to her bed. She told all this, relieving her heart of the troubles and annoyances of the whole year.

Lorie soothed and comforted her, reasoning with her in his grave way, while in his heart he was deeply moved. He repeated the reassuring words of the Minister. "At the first change," and God knows changes were rapid enough in these days. In a month, in a week—perhaps to-morrow—his nomination would be in the *Officiel*.

Then what delightful things were in store for them! A mirage of happiness, health and fortune floated before the eyes of this chimerical employé who had acquired from Chemineau only an air of solemn importance. And she listened to him with her head on his shoulder, asking only that she might live to realize these dreams.

The next morning, on one of those warm, delicious days common on the banks of the Loire, they were breakfasting; the window was open and the invalid lay on her bed with the portraits of her children before her, when she heard the stairs creak under the heavy footsteps of her cousin. He held in his hand the *Officiel* which he regularly received, and was in the habit of reading from the first line to the last.

"Well! the change has taken place, and you are recalled."

He said this roughly, the deference he had shown the previous evening toward the employé in the State Department had vanished. Lorie snatched the journal, but dropped it suddenly to run to his wife, who had become deadly pale.

"No, no!" he cried, "they are mistaken—it is an error!"

The Express was nearly due. In four hours he would be with the Minister and all would be explained. But seeing her so pale, with death written on her face, he was frightened and wanted to wait until the physician had seen her.

"No, no, go at once," she murmured.

In order to make him go, she swore she felt better, and embraced him when he left her with a strength which reassured him in some degree.

Lorie-Dufresne reached Place Beauvau too late. The next day His Excellency did not receive. On the third day, after waiting two hours, he was admitted, not to the presence of the Minister, but of Chemineau, who seemed to be entirely at home.

"Yes, my dear fellow, it is I—I have been here since the morning. You might have had it if you had listened to me. But no, you preferred to come here and make a personal application. That will teach you—"

"But I thought—I was promised—"

"The Minister was compelled. You were the last Sub-Préfet of the 16th of May. I have it. What then?"

They stood upright in front of each other. Their long whiskers cut precisely alike and of the same length, their glasses dangling from the same finger—but with the distance between them that exists in the work of a master and a copy.

He thought of his wife, of his children. This place had been his only resource.

"What am I to do?" he asked, half choking.

Chemineau felt a momentary pity and advised his

companion to call at the Department from time to time; there might be found something for him to do.

Lorie returned to his Hôtel in despair. A telegram awaited him from Ambrose.

“Come at once, she is dying!”

In vain did he hasten. Another was before him, and when he arrived his wife was dead. She died alone with the two Gailletons, far from all who loved her, with despair in her heart as regarded the future of these dear children and beloved husband.

Oh, Politics! have you no bowels of compassion?

## CHAPTER III.

## POVERTY.

CHEMINEAU'S promise detained Lorie in Paris. Besides, what was there for him to do in Africa? The nurse could bring back the children; she could also settle the few small bills and pack the personal property, the books and clothing. Almost all the rest, furniture, china and linen, belonged to the government.

Sylvanire merited this confidence. She had been in the service of the family for twelve years, entering it when Lorie, newly married at Bourges, required a nurse for his first born. Her fair name had been clouded, and her life seemed ruined, when she was taken into this service, and thereby given a chance to redeem herself.

For once this humane and simple charity had its reward. The Lories found in this servant the entire devotion of a strong, handsome girl, who was no longer liable to temptation, and who was disgusted with love, she said. She was proud, too, of serving a government official—a master in an embroidered coat and a *chapeau à claque*.

In the easy, comfortable way with which she man-

aged things, Sylvanire arranged that journey which was far more difficult than Lorie imagined.

When she emerged from the crowd at the station holding by either hand the two orphans in their new mourning, there was a moment of great emotion, one of those sad little dramas which are continually taking place in the stations—among the crushing of luggage and the confusion of the custom house. A man does not care to give way to his feelings, particularly when he wears a magnificent pair of whiskers *à la* Chemineau, but on the contrary pretends to busy himself with trivial details, but tears flow just the same.

“And the luggage?” asked Lorie of Sylvanire, with a half sob; Sylvanire, still more moved, replied that as there was so much, Romain had sent it by the *petite vitesse*.

“Ah! yes, if Romain said so”—

He wanted to add, “it certainly will be right,” but his tears choked him. The children did not weep—they were stunned by their long journey, and were also too young to know what they had lost and how sad it is not to be able to say Mamma, to her who pardons every thing. Poor little Algerians, how dismal Paris seemed to them, passing from the blue sky and sunlight, from the free life of Algiers, to one room on the third floor of a house in the Rue du Mail, dark with the mold on its walls and the poverty of its furniture. Then the dinner at the *table d'hôte*, where they could not speak—all these strange faces—and for amusement only a walk under an umbrella with the nurse who



dared not go further than the Place des Victoires for fear of losing her way.

The father, all this time, was running about in search of employment, while waiting to enter the Department again. What employment?

When a man has spent twenty years in a Department, he no longer comprehends any other duties, and becomes dulled and weary from the emptiness of this official existence.

No one knew better than he, how to write an administrative letter, how to round its phrases and impart to it that colorless style which aspires to only one thing, to speak without saying anything.

No one knew better than he, the proper forms for such letters, how to address a President of the Courts, a Bishop, a Chef de Corps, a "dear old comrade," and how to exalt the banner of the Administration before the magistracy, its irreconcilable enemy. And as to the piles of papers, the green boxes and registers—as to the afternoon visits to the wife of the President, and to the wife of the General, when standing with his back to the chimney, he uttered all sorts of involved but non-committal phrases, agreeing with every body, or contradicting gently with a little wave of the eyeglass held in his fingers, and an "excuse me"—as to presiding to the sound of music and drums at an agricultural fair or a distribution of prizes—as to quoting a verse from Horace, a malicious witticism from Montaigne—as to modulating his intonation according as he addressed children, conscripts, priests, mechanics, sisters or country people—in short as

to all these things and for all the poses and grimaces of the Administrative Department, Lorie-Dufresne was unequalled except by Chemineau.

But of what use was all this now? Was it not terrible at the age of forty to have nothing with which to feed and clothe his children but stereotyped gestures and hollow words?

While awaiting his place in the Department the ex-Sub-Préfet was reduced to apply for work to an agency for dramatic copying.

A dozen of them sat around a long table in an *entresol* of La Rue Montmartre which was so dark that the gas burned all day, writing steadily without speaking a word to each other. All these men with feverish eyes and ragged coats had about them an odor of poverty or worse. Sometimes there appeared among them a well shaved, well fed old soldier wearing a yellow ribbon in his button-hole, who came to work a few hours in the afternoon in order to eke out his little pension.

And in the same uniform hand, on the same uniform paper, very smooth and glossy in order that the pen might glide over it the more smoothly, they copied Tragedies, Comedies, Vaudevilles and Operettas. Their labor was mechanical, they toiled like oxen, with their heads down and with eyes void of expression.

Lorie at first was interested in his work and amused by the fantastic plots falling from the end of his pen, by the surprises in the Vaudevilles and by the modern drama that rang its changes on the dismal subject of women's faithlessness.

"Where do they find all this?" he said to himself, amazed at so many extraordinary complications unlike any of the experiences of his life.

He was also impressed by the number of excellent meals eaten in all these plays; there was always champagne—always oysters and venison pasties—people who talked with their mouths full, and napkins under their chins; while he who wrote out these details, was breakfasting on a two cent roll which he broke off stealthily in the bottom of his pocket. He came to the conclusion that the theatre and life are two very different things.

By this copying Lorie made some days three or four francs which he might have doubled by working at home in the evenings, but the manuscripts were not allowed to be taken away, consequently he was obliged to be idle. And Chemineau, whom he saw every day, and the bill at the Hotel which was swelling to a frightful extent, and the luggage on its way with a bill of three hundred francs, weighed on his soul. Three hundred francs as freight charges! It was incredible, but he understood the meaning of this unreasonable charge, when he saw under a shed at Bucy, this row of boxes and packages all bearing his address.

Finding it impossible to make a judicious selection, Sylvanire had taken everything—all the litter left behind by successive administrations—all that had accumulated at the Sub-Préfect's during his ten years of occupancy. Law books, pamphlets on the alfa eucalyptus, the phyloxera, all Madame's dresses—poor

Madame!—down to old embroidered Kejs and swords for dress parade with handles inlaid with mother of pearl—enough, in short, to open a curiosity shop. All these bore his address and were nailed down solidly by Romain, to protect them from all dangers of sea and land.

These boxes could not be sent to an Hôtel, he must of course secure some lodgings. The little house in the Rue du Val-de-Grace tempted the Sub-Préfet by the provincial aspect of the street, and its vicinity to the Luxembourg where the children could get a breath of fresh air.

The installation was made with some gayety. The children were overjoyed to find their well remembered treasures when they opened the boxes; Fanny's doll, and the carpenter's tools, which were the delight of Maurice. After the dullness and confinement of the Hôtel they found as much amusement here as if it had been a gipsy camp. Many useful things were lacking, but the candle was stuck into an old cologne bottle and newspapers did duty as napkins. There was a good deal of laughing that first night, and when after a light dinner, or rather none at all, the mattresses were unrolled and the boxes piled up, Lorie-Dufresne held up the candle above his head before retiring for the night, and surveyed the extraordinary scene, he uttered one phrase which will be comprehended by most of us:

"It is somewhat disorderly, but at all events it is home." The next day was by no means so cheerful. With the freight on his boxes and his quarter's rent

in advance, Lorie had come to the end of his money—already greatly eaten into by the bill of the Gailletons, travelling expenses and the purchase of a few rods in the Cemetery of Amboise. A very few rods for some one who had never taken up much space in the world.

Winter was coming on, a winter entirely unlike that of Algiers, and the children had not proper clothes, nor shoes.

Fortunately they had Sylvanire. The good girl attended to everything, she went to the lavatory, cut, and mended; cleaned her master's gloves, repaired his eye-glasses with a bit of wire, for the former official in no way neglected his appearance. She sold to the old clothes dealers, and at the second-hand book stalls in the Rue de la Sorbonne, the old law books and pamphlets and still more precious relics, the uniform of the Sub-Préfet, and his coats embroidered with silver thread. One of these Administrative garments which the dealer would not accept because of its decrepitude, served as a dressing-gown for Lorie and saved his only coat; it was a strange sight to see him, dignified and shivering under this ragged embroidery, pacing the room to keep warm, while Sylvanire sewed by the light of one candle and the children slept in the packing cases which had been transformed into beds, in order that they might not be chilled on the cold floor.

No, never in all the plays that he copied, fantastic and extravagant as they were, had Lorie-Dufresne seen anything so extraordinary.

## CHAPTER IV.

ELINE EBSSEN.

GRANDMOTHER at her window had watched all the movements of the people below. Her trembling hands now dropped her stitches and refused to hold the volume of Andersen, consequently she had little amusement except that afforded by the street, and as there was little passing there—only from time to time the white epaulettes of a hospital nurse, the embroidered collar of a pupil, the stiff winged caps of two good Sisters—the arrival of the Lories was an agreeable variation.

She knew the hours of the father, the purchases made by the nurse, and the days that the man came with the basket. The little girl interested her particularly as she pressed close to the side of her nurse with a shiver, or stepped over the little puddles of water with her slender legs but half covered.

Grandmother had her suspicions of this woman. The old lady knew every detail of the child's toilette, her two worn and shabby black dresses, the run-over heels of her boots, and she became occasionally very indignant.

"Did one ever see the like? Do they mean to cripple the darling? One would think they might at least remove the heels!"

She watched the child to see if she had on her cloak, and became uneasy if she were out in the rain, and was not satisfied until at the corner of the street and the Boulevard Saint-Michel, she saw between two flocks of pigeons, the Berrichonne standing rooted to the sidewalk, clutching the boy with one hand and the little girl with the other, waiting with the abject terror of all provincials for the carriages to pass.

"Come on! come on!" murmured grandmother, as if she could make them hear, and beckoning to them from behind the glass.

Madame Ebsen, being romantic and sentimental, was greatly impressed by the dignity of the father and by the heavy crape band on his head. It was mourning for his wife, of course, as the mother of the children had never been seen. Between the two women, long discussions arose in regard to their neighbors.

Eline, always busy with her pupils, talked less of the Lories, but her heart was touched by the sight of these motherless children almost alone in Paris, and whenever she met them she smiled and strove to make their acquaintance, in spite of the existence of the Berrichonne nurse. On Christmas Eve—the evening which these Danish ladies never failed to celebrate—she went down to invite these children with others of the same age to eat *risengrod*, and all the sweet things hung from the branches of a Christmas tree among lighted candles and minute lanterns.

Think what grief for the little ones, concealed behind Sylvanire's skirts, as she stood stoutly in the doorway! Think of the heart-break as they heard

her say that the children never went out, that Monsieur had issued orders to that effect, and then for them to hear over their heads all the evening joyous shouts, the sound of the piano, and the patter of little feet around the Christmas tree!

This time, Monsieur Lorie thought that Sylvanire had exceeded her authority, and the next day the children were dressed and he went with them to call on the ladies. They were all at home; the ceremonious entrance of the former Sub-Préfet, the pretty salutations of the boy and his sister greatly impressed these simple people.

Fanny was charmed to be near the lady who had so often smiled upon her when they met on the stairs, and to be welcomed by the old lady who watched them daily from the window. Eline took the child on her knees, and as she filled her pockets with the sweets left from the previous evening, she made her talk.

"Seven years old already? What a big girl! You will soon be going to school?"

"Oh! no, Mademoiselle, not yet," answered the father quickly, as if he feared some *naïveté* on the part of the child. "She is very delicate and must not be pushed. The boy, on the contrary, has the health of an athlete, the temperament suited to his profession."

"You intend, then—?" began Madame Ebsen.

"To make him a sailor," said the father, without hesitation. "At sixteen he will enter at Navale," and turning to the boy who was lounging on a chair he brought him up straight with a gesture and the words, "Eh, Maurice—the *Borda*!"



At the name of this school vessel, little Fanny's eyes flashed proudly, while the future aspirant, touching the anchor on his cap and lifting one of those huge childish noses which seem always to be saying to the rest of the body, "Hurry, I am getting ahead of you," uttered an ecstatic "Ah!" and relapsed into profound silence.

"The air of Paris affects him," said Monsieur Lorie, as if to excuse this apparent apathy, and then went on to say that they were only temporarily established in Paris, in order that certain business might be settled; therefore they had done very little toward making themselves comfortable, and they needed many little things.

All this was said in an easy, matter-of-course tone, with his eyeglass dangling and hat held gracefully in one hand. His phrases were beautifully rounded, and a faint, agreeable smile ruffled the solemnity of his regular, haughty face. Madame Ebsen and her daughter were deeply impressed.

Eline, though she thought Monsieur Lorie a little pragmatic, was touched by the simple words in which he alluded to the death of his wife. His voice then sank into a hoarse whisper, and the man seemed to be totally transformed. She was quite convinced from certain things in the child's dress, although she was evidently in her best—by the darns in her embroidered collar and by the rusty ribbons on her hat, that, in spite of the father's fine phrases, they could not be very rich. Her sympathy was increased by this poverty which she divined, but of the extent of which she could form no idea.

Some days after this visit Sylvanire rang hastily at the door of these ladies. Fanny was ill, very ill. She had been suddenly seized, and the nurse, in the absence of her master, addressed herself in her terror, to the only persons she knew. Eline ran quickly down with her mother, and both were aghast at the squalid poverty of the three fireless rooms, without curtains or furniture, where piles of ragged books and green pasteboard boxes filled the corners.

Scattered about were cooking utensils, two or three mattresses rolled up and packing boxes of all shapes and sizes, either uncovered and showing old linen and papers, or empty and serving as furniture. One of them was turned over, with "fragile" written on the four corners. On this were plates, a crust of bread and a corner of cheese, left from their recent breakfast. Another was occupied as a bed by the little girl, who was as pale and pinched as if she were in her coffin, while at one side sat the future member of the crew of the *Borda*, sobbing bitterly under his shining hat.

The arrangement of the rooms was the same as above, and the contrast of their gay little *salon*, the warmth and comforts of their chambers with this bare and chilly place, struck to Eline's heart like a reproach. How was it possible to live side by side with such poverty and distress and never suspect it?

She remembered the easy air with which the former Sub-Préfect had alluded, as he swung his eyeglass, to still "needing some little things." Yes, he did need little things—for example, fire, blankets, clothing—

and the children were dying for the lack of these little things.

“Quick! A doctor!”

Young Aussandon, an army physician, had been spending his leave with his parents, and Madame Ebsen ran to find him, while Eline busied herself with transforming the little room, opening an iron bedstead brought down in haste, and assisting Sylvanire, who had lost her head, to build a fire with the wood that grandmother thrust into the woman's apron, she, all the time repeating, “What will my master say! What will my master say!”

“Well?” asked Eline, who had impatiently awaited the end of the consultation which took place in the small room, taking care not to appear until the braided *kepi* of young Aussandon had disappeared in the fog of the little garden.

The good Madame Ebsen was quite radiant. “It is nothing!” she said; “a bilious fever—a few days of rest and careful nursing. Look at her—she seems better already, since she was placed in a comfortable bed.”

Then, leaning toward her daughter, she whispered:

“He asked about you so tenderly! I think he still hopes!”

“Poor fellow!” said Eline, busy in arranging the child in the narrow bed where she had herself slept when she was little, and while Fanny's eyes bright with fever smiled upon her, she felt on her hand a wet caress like that of a great dog.

It was Sylvanire who, with eyes streaming with tears, offered speechless thanks with her lips. No—

this woman was not wicked and neglectful, as her grandmother fancied. In the evening when Lorie came in, Fanny was sleeping soundly within close drawn muslin curtains.

~ A good fire was burning in the chimney. There were white curtains at the windows, a table and an arm-chair. The light of a night lamp made a round spot on the ceiling, and the whole room bore the evidence of maternal, watchful care. But these changes were only in the child's room.

From this day intimacy was established between the two families.

The ladies had adopted Fanny, calling her up stairs to them perpetually, and never allowing her to return without some little gift—warm mittens for her slender hands, long stockings, or a woollen fichu. Eline, on returning from her lessons, gave her an hour of instruction every evening.

Left to the companionship of a servant for so long, the child's mind was filled with the fancies of Mother Goose, and her distinguished little form and face were marred by provincialisms and by those defects of accent and expression common to children who are allowed to remain too much with their nurses.

Eline left to her mother all material cares, and herself sought to release Fanny from the undue influence of Sylvanire, and restore her to her proper position as a young lady, without at the same time wounding the susceptibilities of the loving but jealous nurse.

What could not this Lina with her gentle grace have succeeded in doing? She had but to whisper a word

in the ear of the Baronne Gerspach, where Chemineau was received, and almost immediately a position was found for Lorie in the office of *Monsieur le Directeur*, hitherto so inaccessible. Two hundred francs monthly! Of course there was something better to be hoped for, but at all events it was a step gained, a re-entrance into this Administration, the exile from which was killing him.

Oh! the joy of fingering once more those rustling papers, of opening and closing those green boxes with their musty odor, of feeling himself once more one of the wheels of that machine, so complicated and august, so heavy, awkward and decrepid, known as the French Administration. Lorie-Dufresnes was rejuvenated.

And what repose, after the fatigues of the day, to go with Fanny in the evening to call on the Ebsens. The modest *salon*, where the heavy, superannuated furniture—the console of the Empire brought from Copenhagen—the electric clock which had never gone, and had caused all their sorrows, contrasted with a pretty sofa made by a fashionable upholsterer, and a *cloisonné jardinière*, both presents from rich pupils. The lace made by the old lady was thrown over everything, and imparted an air of freshness charming to eyes already pleased by these three gentlewomen—grandmother, daughter and grandchild—three ages represented with dignity and grace.

While Eline busied herself with little Fanny and her books, Lorie talked with Madame Ebsen, entertained her with accounts of his days of power and with narrations of his past successes.

He liked to talk of his Administration, of the services rendered to the colony by his faculty of organization, and remembering suddenly certain speeches he had made, he forgot himself, and, with arm outstretched toward an imaginary audience, he quoted from one of them:

“Many positions and much to do. This, gentlemen, is the motto of all new countries.”

In the corner where grandmother slept behind her spectacles, the lamp light fell on a calmer group—Fanny, leaning over her book with a gentle, protecting gesture, while without, twenty feet away from this provincial street, thundered the tempest of the Boulevard Saint-Michel, the roar of carriages and the noise of the students on their way toward the ball room, from which came faint sounds of dance music.

It was one of those double currents of Paris, so complex and difficult to seize.

On Sunday evenings the *salon* was very gay. The candles on the piano were lighted in honor of the arrival of a few friends. Two Danish families—acquaintances of these ladies ever since they came to Paris—with heavy, dull faces, sat around the room against the wall.

Then there was Monsieur Birk, a young clergyman from Copenhagen, recently sent to Paris to assist at the Danish Temple in the Rue Chanchat. Eline, who in the time of the former pastor, Monsieur Larsen, had played the organ on Sundays at the Temple, continued this gratuitous service under the new comer, who believed himself thus obliged to pay a few polite

visits, although no real sympathy existed between himself and these parishioners. This tall fellow with a yellow beard and a commonplace face pitted with small-pox, affected great austerity in speech and demeanor. In reality he was a coarse-natured business man, who was well aware that pastors in Paris marry rich wives, and intended to utilize his stay in this Babylon to gather in some big dowry.

Madame Ebsen's *salon* could be of no use to him in this direction, as her only visitors were very plain people without fortune. Consequently he never lingered long, but gave others to understand that the atmosphere was not orthodox enough for him. It is true these ladies were very tolerant, and occupied themselves very little with the religious faith of the persons they received, but this did not prevent Monsieur Larsen from meeting for many years Pastor Aussandon at their house.

The illustrious Dean, in order to reach the dwelling of his neighbors, had only to cross the little garden that separated them from his house. In this garden he was often seen bending over his rose bushes, while from a window, impetuous little Madame Aussandon with her cap all crooked, watched over him, and called at the first breath of wind:

"Aussandon, you must come in."

"Yes, my dear."

And he obeyed, as docile as a child. Thanks to their vicinity and to the translations which the old pastor so often required for his lectures on Ecclesiastical History, the two families had become extremely inti-

mate, and some little time before the arrival of Lorie in the house, the younger of the Aussandon sons, Paul, the one whom his mother always called the Major, asked Eline Ebsen's hand in marriage.

Unfortunately, the life of a military surgeon, is life in a garrison, and always on the move. Eline could not leave her mother and her grandmother, and at once said "no," without allowing any one to see how great was the effort that this "no" cost her. Since then the relations between the families had never been the same. Madame Aussandon avoided the ladies; they kept up a speaking acquaintance, but ceased visiting, and the Sunday *soirées* lost much of their animation, for the old Dean was very jovial and his wife had a terrible fashion of blowing her nose, which echoed through the salon like a trumpet, especially when Henriette Briss was there and discussed theology.

This Henriette Briss was an old maid, anywhere between thirty and thirty-five. A Norwegian and a Catholic, she had spent some ten years in a convent in Christiana. She left it on account of bad health, and since then had been struggling to resume what she called "worldly habits."

Accustomed to living by rule, to unquestioning dependence, having laid aside all sense of the initiative, and of responsibility, she went about in a state of nervous excitement, uttering little shrill cries for aid like a bird that had fallen from its nest. Nevertheless she was intelligent and well-informed. She spoke several languages, which had gained her positions as governess



in Russia and Poland among wealthy families. But she remained nowhere. She was continually startled and shocked by the realities of life from which the blinding white veil of the Order of the Virgin no longer protected her. "Let us be practical," repeated the poor soul every little while, as if to strengthen herself.

No human being could have been less practical than this unsettled creature, with features sharpened by dyspepsia, and hair badly arranged under a round travelling hat—dressed in an odd mixture of her own economical purchases, and the rich but faded finery of her employers—wearing furs in summer over her thin light dresses.

She had remained a Catholic in her observances, but was at the same time a Liberal, almost a Revolutionist. She professed an enthusiastic admiration for Garibaldi and Father Didon, uttered the wildest sentiments and promulgated the maddest ideas. At the end of a little time she terrified the parents of her pupils, and hurried back to Paris, the only place, she said, in the world, where she felt at ease, and where she could draw a long and comfortable breath.

Suddenly, when she was supposed to be in a situation at Moscow or Copenhagen, Henriette would appear, overjoyed at her deliverance, and hiring a little furnished room, would go to hear the great preachers of the day, visit the Sisters in their Convent, the Priests in their Sacristies, and attend a course of Lectures on Theology—taking notes of them all. Her dream was to make a profession of Catholic journalism,

and she wrote regularly to Louis Veillot, who never answered her.

In the meantime, every where she went, and more especially in the Rue du Val-de-Grace, which she greatly affected because of the Lutheran element she met there, Henriette Briss talked in torrents, disputing, arguing and quoting texts, going away utterly exhausted, with parched lips and a headache, but delighted at having made a profession of faith.

Then, when her money was gone, at which she was always astonished, she took any situation that offered itself, and went off in a desperate state of mind, not to be heard of again for some time.

When Lorie met her in the salon of Madame Ebsen, she was for the moment greatly discouraged. She had postponed securing a situation, and while waiting for replies to her letters, had been obliged to place herself as a boarder in a Convent in the Rue du Cherche-Midi—a sort of Employment Bureau for women, where her democratic ideas received a severe shock by coming in contact with vicious and hypocritical creatures who crossed themselves in the chapel and at the entrance of the parlor, while in their rooms they sang vulgar songs and covered the steel stars in their hair with caps when they went down to speak to their future employés.

Each Sunday at the Ebsens', whose quarters were too narrow to take her in, she moaned over her woes and told of her trials and mortifications amid such surroundings. Her friends, although they loved her could not assist her, for the money they had some-

times given her to pay the rent of a room, had been spent in some foolish caprice or in some worthless charity.

Henriette understood their distrust and was in despair that she was not more practical, "like Monsieur Lorie, for example, or you, dear Lina."

"I do not know that I am practical," said Eline smiling; "but I try to wish the same thing a long time and to do with pleasure that which I know I ought to do."

"Well, I ought to educate children, and I do educate them, but never with pleasure. In the first place, I don't like them. One is obliged to be so careful what one says before them. One is obliged to lower oneself to their intellect. It is really degrading."

"Ah! Henriette!"

Lina looked at her companion in terror. To her, who loved children so tenderly, and to whom they eagerly turned, those who could walk and those who could read, as well as those who were simply little balls of dimpled flesh to be kissed and petted—to her who went to the Luxembourg only to see them, and stopped to watch their games or their slumbers under the sheltering hood of their carriages—to her who smiled into all these little questioning eyes, and who, if she saw one of those tender heads exposed to the wind or the sun, would accost the careless nurse and bid her change the position of her parasol with the words, "Nurse! look out for your child!"—to her, then, these words of Henriette's seemed absolutely monstrous. She could not understand this lack

of maternal sentiment in a woman. The difference between these two temperaments was visible at a glance; one born for maternity—a small head, large hips and a calm face—the other all ungraceful angles, with long flat hands that looked like those we see outspread in pre-Raphaelite pictures.

Madame Ebsen sometimes interfered.

“But, my dear Henriette, why do you continue to educate children, if you feel thus? Why do you not return to your parents? They are old, you say—they are alone, your mother is infirm, you can assist her; there is the linen to see to, the cooking—”

“I might as well marry,” answered Henriette hastily, “Thank you, I am nothing of a housekeeper, and I loathe all these menial tasks which occupy only the fingers.”

“One can always think,” said Eline.

But the other continued without listening. “Besides, my family are poor, I should be a burden to them. Then too, they are little more than peasants, they would not understand me.”

At these words Madame Ebsen lost her temper.

“And this is what you Papists do with your convents?” she cried. “Is it not cruel to tear daughters from their parents, to despoil them of the natural supports of their old age—to take away every remembrance of home—every sentiment of family ties! Upon my word it is a fine work these Sisters do!”

Henriette Briss did not become angry but she defended her dear Sisters and her convent with all sorts of arguments and texts. She had passed eleven years

delightfully there, she had hardly noticed their lapse. She had had no responsibility, known no need of decisive steps, and the awakening seemed to her very rough. "The truth is Madame Ebsen, in this material century there is no other refuge for discerning minds."

The good lady's wrath fairly choked her.

"Upon my word, upon my word! Go back to your Sisters then, lazy indolent creatures that they are!"

At this moment a shower of silvery notes broke up their discussion; the wall flowers had become gently animated and had drawn around the piano. In her limpid voice Eline began a Romance of Chopin's. Then it was her grandmother's turn, who was petitioned to sing some old Scandinavian song which Lina translated to Lorie. The old lady sat erect in her arm chair and sang the song of King Christian, "Standing near the tall mast, wrapped in smoke."

And then the melancholy invocation to the far away country, "Denmark, with thy fair fields and meadows, washed by the blue waves."

There was no more singing at the Ebsens. The piano was mute, the candles in the *salon* unlighted. The old Danish woman had gone, gone to a land of fair fields and meadows, but a land so distant and so vast that no one has ever seen it.

## CHAPTER V.

## MORNING HOURS.

THE little Lories were alone in the house a few days after the death of the grandmother. Their father was at the Bureau, Sylvanire had gone to market, locking the door carefully as she always did when she left them, for she had not been able to conquer the terror and distrust she felt on her first arrival. She believed, for example that a great traffic in stolen children was organized in Paris, to furnish the city with the young creatures who played the harp before the *cafés*, and performed various tricks on the public squares, and even—horrible thought!—to furnish material for excellent hot pies.

When therefore she left Maurice and Fanny in the house she gave them always the same order: "Open the door to no one, to no one except Romain."

Romain was the man with the basket whose appearance had so puzzled the poor grandmother. He had arrived from Algiers a few days after themselves, remaining only to install his successor, for he too was an official, porter and gardener at the Sub-Préfecture; to these duties he added those of coachman and husband to Sylvanire, but these latter were so slight that they seemed hardly worth mentioning. The Berrichonne had with difficulty decided on this marriage. Since the

affair at Bourges the handsomest man on earth would not have tempted her, still less this little bald Romain, with a complexion that looked like an omelette cooled in oil, a complexion which he had brought back with him from Senegal, where, on leaving the navy, he had acted as gardener to the Governor.

But her master approved. And then the man was so good and kind, so clean in every way, he arranged such beautiful bouquets, he amused the children with his pretty inventions, he had looked at her so tenderly, and when in order to discourage him she had told him of early error, he still persevered ; so Sylvanire felt that she must consent.

"Very well then, my poor Romain, but really!" and the shrug of her shoulders seemed to say, "really it is a very strange idea!"

Romain's reply was an unintelligible mixture of passionate protestations, oaths of eternal fidelity and of vengeance against the whole artillery corps *cre' cochon!* This was his phrase on all occasions, and one of which he could never break himself. The day that Admiral de Genouilly saved him from a court martial, and the day that Madame Lorie promised to use her influence to induce Sylvanire to marry him, Romain thanked them in the same way "*Cré Cochon*, my Admiral! *Cré Cochon*, Madame Lorie!" and this meant as much as the most vehement protestations of gratitude from any other person.

When they were married their life remained the same. She remained with her employers and he in his garden and at the hall door ; they were never together.

At night Sylvanire took care of her invalid mistress, and when madame had gone, she continued to sleep up stairs on account of the children, while her husband was alone in the lodge. After some months of this severe regime, with only an occasional gleam of mitigated sunshine, the fall of the Sub-Préfet came to pass and Sylvanire was ordered to take Maurice and Fanny to Paris.

"And what is to become of me?" asked Romain as he roped the boxes.

"How can I help it? At all events I must go!"

What he wanted, of course, was to live with her, alone with her—and yet she was going off to Paris. But Monsieur would take them both when he was settled again, and he gave up his place without regret.

When he reached the Rue du Val-de-Grace, and Sylvanire with an eloquent gesture pointed to the children, the poverty-stricken rooms and the piled up boxes, the poor husband could only say: "*Cré Cochon*, wife!"

"It is plain," he continued, "that for the present we can't be together. There is no need of a coachman here, nor a gardener nor butler!"

"Sylvanire is all we require just now," said Monsieur Lorie with his imperial air, and advised the man to look for some place.

Romain did not object, but regarded the arrangement as only temporary.

"Besides us," she said, "there are innumerable similar instances in Paris. Many a husband and wife are compelled to live apart, but that is one reason why they should love each other better, perhaps," and the good woman smiled under her white cap.



"Very good, then; I will find something to do," said Romain, who succeeded in a much shorter time than his Préfect had done.

He had but to go down to the shores of the Seine and have his choice among several occupations—he could be a collier, a stevedore, or he could enter one of the Lavatories. Then he was engaged at one of the toll gates. He fancied this employment because it was almost like that of the government, and because he, like Lorie, had an Administrative passion.

His place was a hard one. He performed all his duties faithfully, but as soon as he could escape, he hurried to Val-de-Grace, always with some surprise in his big basket, the perquisites of his employment. Sometimes it was two or three fagots of wood, still wet as when he drew them from the Seine, or it was a package of coffee or some apples. He brought these things to Sylvanire, but all the house profited by them. And often there came a bit of beef, or something of that kind, that had no possible connection with the river.

Lately, Romain's visits had become more rare. He had been made keeper of the toll-gate at Petit-Port, three leagues from Paris. One hundred francs per month, light and fire, with a cosy little cottage on the edge of the water and a garden where he could raise flowers and vegetables. It was a fortune.

He would never have accepted this position, however, never consented to go thus far from Sylvanire, if she had not insisted upon his doing so. The spring was coming on, and she would come to see him, and

bringing the children would remain several days. The little ones would enjoy it so much. Who could tell that they might not all live together before long. She could not explain herself further, and Romain, in an ecstasy of happiness, went at once to take possession of his new post, which permitted him to make but brief and few visits to his wife.

After this, when Sylvanire went out she made no exceptions. When Romain was gone the door was to be opened to no one. These were the strict orders she gave to the children. But with charming ingenuousness, these little Algerines, accustomed to fresh air and yet who had been compelled for so long a time to live with blinds close shut in order to conceal the poverty of their home, now opened the windows wide, forgetting that one long step was their elevation from the street. What danger could there be in a street so quiet, where the cats slept in the sunshine, and where the pink claws of the pigeons scratched undisturbed between the stones. They were proud to show, too, that they had beds, chairs, a wardrobe, and two *etagères* for their books.

The old furniture, that is to say the packing boxes, had been consumed by Sylvanire as kindling wood, and there was now only one or two left, which supplied the future sailor with material out of which he cut boats and oars. These were his preparations for entering the School. He inherited a taste for naval construction from his father, and Lorie-Dufresne had been long in the habit on his reception days in Algiers of presenting him when the children entered the room as "our

sailor," or to exclaim with a triumphant air: "Eh? Maurice—the *Borda*!"

At first the child was enchanted by the respect shown by his comrades for this glorious vocation, and more especially for his cap, which was an idea of his mother's, but when it became more serious, when he saw mathematics and trigonometry rise before him, for these were as little to his taste, as was the ocean and its adventures, his life was embittered. He assumed a discouraged, distressed air, under this threat of the *Borda* with which all the world bombarded him. His nose lengthened over the equations and the columns of figures in the big books, and when he thought of himself as the future pupil of Navale he was frightened at the thought of all he had to learn before he could enter, and still more terrified at the idea that perhaps he would not be admitted.

Through all this, however, his childhood's tastes continued, and he was never happier than when Fanny said to him: "Make me a boat."

He was now making a sloop, more magnificent than any the basin of the Luxembourg had ever received. He was working with ardor; all his tools were on the window ledge, hammer and saw, while his little sister handed him his measuring tape, and the ragamuffins of the neighborhood, with their pantaloons in tatters, looked on from the street with admiration.

Suddenly came a shout: "Look out! Look out!" There was a great clatter, dogs barked and children and pigeons lightly flew away to make room for a beautiful carriage, piebald horses and maroon livery,

which drew up before the Lorie windows. An old lady descended, tall, thin, dressed in black, with a mantle of the same. She darted a glance at the two children from a pair of wicked eyes, looking from under brows as thick as a mustache.

"Does Madame Ebsen live here?"

With compressed lips and fists close shut, the future sailor answered with a courage which his little sister greatly admired: "No—the floor above." And then he quickly closed the window on this vision of a lady in black, such as were always in Sylvanire's stories.

Fanny murmured breathlessly:

"That is certainly one."

Then, at the end of a moment when the steps had passed their door, the little girl added:

"Did you see how she looked at us? I thought she was coming in at the window."

"I should like to have seen her do it," answered the sailor; but he was mistaken.

So long as they felt that this woman was over their heads, so long as this carriage shut the street from their view, they sat motionless—daring neither to speak, breathe nor drive a nail.

At last they heard the voice of Madame Ebsen conducting some one to the head of the stairs. A silk dress rustled past their door. She was going out. The sailor to reassure himself lifted a corner of the curtain and dropped it again instantly. The woman was there and she was looking at him as if she wanted to carry him away with her. Then the carriage door was shut with a bang, the horses started and the

shadow made by the carriage before their window vanished like a bad dream.

"Ah! How glad I am!" said little Fanny with a sigh of relief.

That evening when Lorie went up with little Fanny for her lesson he found Madame Ebsen quite moved by her visit.

"Ah! Yes, who was it?" he asked. "I heard about the carriage."

She with considerable pride held out to him a large thick card.

### JEANNE AUTHEMAN.

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDRRESS

*of the Work of the Evangéliste Ladies.*

PARIS—PORT SAUVEUR.

"Madame Autheman! the wife of the banker? Not she herself, but some one in her name to ask Lina to translate a book of Prayers." And she pointed to a small gilt-edged volume on the table. "*Morning Hours* by Madame \* \* \* with this epigraph: 'A woman lost the world, a woman will save it.' They want two translations, English and German. They will pay three sous for each prayer."

"A singular traffic, is it not?" said Lina without raising her eyes from Fanny's exercise which she was correcting.

"No, Linette, not in the least, it is a fair price," answered Madame Ebsen in the most natural tone. The good woman was no mystic, then lowering her

voice in order not to disturb the lesson, she went on talking to Lorie of the strange person that had brought the order, Mademoiselle—but the name was on the card. Yes *Anne de Beuil*, Hôtel Autheman.

Yes, her name was de Beuil, but she had the air of a peasant—of a housekeeper, rather than of a *grande dame*. She had asked many questions, whether the ladies saw many people. And then looking at Lina's photograph on the mantel she said it was much too gay.

"Too gay!" repeated Lorie indignantly, for his heart had been sore at the depression of the girl since the death of her grandmother.

"Ah! she said much more than that. We were frivolous creatures and did not live enough with God she gave us a regular sermon with gestures and quotations. It is a pity that Henriette was not here at the time. They would have made a lovely pair!"

"Mademoiselle Briss has gone then?" asked Lorie, who was interested in this scatterbrain, probably because she considered him so practical.

"Yes, a week ago with the Princess Souverine, who has engaged her as companion. A splendid situation. No children!"

"She ought to be content, then."

"Quite the contrary. She wrote to us from Vienna and she regrets her quarters in the Rue du Cherché-Midi. Ah! poor Henriette."

And returning to her visitor of the morning and the reproach that had been made to her that they did not live enough with God, she said:

"In the first place it is not true. Every Sunday she plays the organ in the Rue Chancat and never misses an assembly. As to myself have I ever had time to be much of a *devotee*? I should like to see this same Mademoiselle de Beuil with an old mother and child to support. It was necessary to be on my feet all day long, at all seasons of the year and from one end to the other of Paris. At night I fell on my bed absolutely exhausted, without strength for a prayer, scarcely for a thought. But was it not piety to toil in order to gain a happy life for mamma, and for Lina a good education by which she can always maintain herself? Ah! dear child, she will be spared the hard experiences which were mine!"

Becoming animated as she related all she had suffered, she told of the lessons she had given for twenty sous in the back shops of people who were as needy as herself, how she had received a French lesson and given in return a German one. She described the exactions of some of her patrons and how she was obliged to walk with one young girl who was very stout, in all kinds of weather, from the Rue de l'Etoile to the Bastille, while she taught her her verbs and heard her recite them in the wind and the rain.

All this went on for years, all these privations, all these humiliations of a woman who is poor—shabby toilettes, a breakfast given up to save six sous for the omnibus. At last the day came when she entered the boarding school of Madame de Bourlon, a fashionable school where only the daughters of rich merchants and bankers were received. There was Leonie

Rougier, now the Comtesse d'Aulot, Deborah Becker, who had become the Baronne Gerspach. There too she had known a pretty, eccentric person named Jeanne Châtelus, a strong Protestant, who always carried a little Bible in her pocket and gave little religious lectures in the hours of recreation to her companions in the corners of the play-ground. It was said that she would marry some young missionary and that they would go off together to convert the heathen. She left the convent very suddenly and three months afterwards she was Madame Autheman."

Lorie made a little gesture of surprise.

"Yes," said Madame Ebsen, smiling. "You understand there was some difference between a missionary without a sou, and the wealthiest banker in Paris. She had a great deal of courage. Her husband is frightful. All one side of his face is disfigured by a huge wen which he conceals by a band of black silk. It is in the family, a birth-mark among the Authemans. The mother had it on her arms and hands, and wore long gloves to her elbows, night and day. With their cousins, the Beckers, it is the same thing. But the son is the worst, and a woman must have been very anxious to be rich, to marry him!"

From the grandmother's corner came Lina's sweet voice, protesting. She had finished her lesson and was turning over the "Morning Hours."

"How do you know that she married him because she wished to be rich? It might have been from a feeling of pity, the need of devoting herself to some



one or something, of sacrificing herself. The world is so bad and life is so short!"

As she spoke she bowed her head with its heavy blonde braids over the pages she was to translate. Her cheeks, on which was a peach-like down, were a little pale.

"Listen, mamma," she exclaimed. "I think this means me, the young lady who is too gay. Listen: '*Laughing and gayety are the indications of a corrupt heart. Hearts need only the Peace of God to reign within them.*'"

"The truth is," said the mother, "that I have never seen this little Châtelus laugh, and you understand, it is she who made this book."

Lina interrupted her mother suddenly:

"There it is again." She raised the book from the table and read with a shudder: "'*A father, a mother, and children demand affection. In any event they die. To allow your heart to cling to them is to make a very unfortunate calculation.*'"

"Upon my word!" cried Madame Ebsen, and her tone was one of positive anger.

"Wait a moment!" And Lina continued, emphasizing the words:

"'*A good calculation is to love Christ, to love only Him; Christ never deceives, Christ never dies; but He is jealous of our affection. He demands it entirely. This is why we make war upon all idols, and tear from our hearts all that conflicts with Him.*' Do you hear that, mamma! It is a sin for us to love each other! You must tear me from your heart, that Christ may

stand between us and separate us with His two outstretched and crucified arms. This is infamous! No—I will never translate that!”

Her gesticulation was almost violent, extraordinarily so for a nature serene and gentle as hers, and the child felt a certain shock. She shivered.

“No—no—I am not angry,” said Eline, taking Fanny on her knee and embracing her.

Lorie, without well knowing why, colored deeply as he looked on.

“Ah! Linette, you are very wrong to disturb us all in this way,” said her mother. “As if it were necessary to take such folly to heart! This lady’s prayer is very stupid, I admit, but it is not for that reason that we will stop loving each other.”

They exchanged one of those glances of confidence which can exist only between people of the same blood.

“Never mind,” said Lina, still irritated; “these follies are contagious and may do a great deal of harm—to youthful heads, and weak natures.”

“I must say that I agree with Madame,” said Lorie, “although—”

Madame Ebsen shrugged her shoulders. “What does it matter? Who reads such books?”

They were of little more importance than those Anglican tracts that are distributed on the Champs Elysées, like advertisements of a clothing shop or of a restaurant. It was a mere business matter, so far as they were concerned. They always talked openly before Lorie, and at three sous for each prayer, money was to be made. They would both work at it, and after this

volume there would be others, and when people were poor one could not be over fastidious. It was advisable to save up a little money for Lina's *trousseau* when she married.

Before the end of the discussion, Lorie rose hastily.

"Come, Fanny; say good night."

This pleasant room, always so full of friendliness and gayety for himself and his children, seemed suddenly to grow dark and cold. He felt as if he were a stranger paying a formal visit. And all this because good Madame Ebsen had regarded him as a man of no importance, and had spoken before him of Lina's marriage.

Yes—she would marry. This charming girl would probably marry very soon, and her husband would be a proud and happy man. She was cultivated, she was brave, and sensible, with such infinite tenderness.

The thought made him sad, and haunted him when he was alone in his little room overlooking the garden.

The children slept in the next room, and he could hear the little girl telling Sylvanire as she undressed, all that had taken place that evening with "the dear ladies." "Mademoiselle said," and "Mademoiselle was angry."

Mademoiselle held a very important place in the child's mind now, but when she married there would be children, and she would have no time to think of Fanny. And the poor man thought how Eline had transformed his home, merely by entering it that one terrible day.

Then to relieve his mind he thought he would do a

little work, "attend to some classifications." This was his passion, his supreme resource when uneasy, anxious and sad. It consisted of putting in order some of the green boxes, labelled in different hand-writings, "Business Letters," "Family," "Political," "Miscellaneous." Since the time that he first arranged these precious bundles he had changed these classifications several times.

The package on which he laid his hand that night bore the name "Valentine," like the inscription on a tombstone.

These were all that remained to him of his wife, these letters that bore the date of the year of her illness, for never before had they been separated. There were many of these, and they were long. The first were sad enough, full of tender injunctions in regard to the health of the children, his own, and also directions in regard to the household management of Romain and Sylvanire. Afterward came murmurs about her own health and her separation from all she loved.

Soon appeared a certain bitterness, anger and despair, a revolt against destiny which she felt to be pitiless, although she was still encouraged to hope by her physician.

Amid all this agony, she still remembered her household duties, and her solicitude for the children. There was a postscript for Sylvanire. "Do not forget to have the mattresses carded!" And the writing was stained here and there as if by tears; its irregularities indicated the trembling of the tired hand and the progress of her malady.

The writing of the last letter no more resembled that of the first, than did the worn, drawn face he had seen in the little room at Amboise, resemble the woman who had left him a year before. Her illness then had made no ravages, and her ripe beauty caused all the sailors to turn and look at her as she went on board the steamer.

This last letter, Valentine had written after she sent him to Paris to try and retain his position, without telling him that she knew she was about to die.

"I knew it though," she wrote, "I knew we should never see each other again; but it was necessary for your sake, for the sake of our children, that you should see the Minister at once. Ah! why could we not have passed these few last hours together. To think that with a husband and two children, I yet must die alone!"

After these words of supreme despair, there was not another complaint, only words of resignation. She became once more the patient, serene creature that she had been when in health—encouraging, advising him. She was sure that he would be restored—the Government could not afford to lose so valuable an official as himself. The house, the education of the children, their health, all that which a busy man is forced to leave to others, was what the dying woman was disturbed about. Sylvanire was married, she would not therefore remain forever with them; and then, devoted as she was, she was after all but a servant.

Slowly, delicately, in words carefully chosen, and which were evidently hard for her to write—whole

sentences were erased—she spoke of a possible marriage later, some day—“he was so young still. Only make a good choice, and give our little ones a mother who will be really a mother.”

Never had these last injunctions, read often before, since his wife's death, impressed Lorie as this evening while he sat in the profound silence of the sleeping house. Suddenly he heard a gentle footfall above—a window was closed, a curtain was drawn—and tears, which lengthened and blurred through the words, he continued to read and re-read, “only make a good choice.”

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE HOTEL AUTHEMAN.

THOSE who saw it ten years ago, during the lifetime of the old mother, would have had great difficulty in recognizing the Hôtel of the celebrated Bankers, one of the oldest and finest still remaining in the Marais—with its square towers, its high walls and irregular windows, crowned with capitals and carved garlands. At that time there was, as in all these princely dwellings transformed into commercial houses, a wide-awake, industrious aspect, and under its vast porch was a constant going and coming of carts and drays, crossing the immense courtyard, doing duty between the Parisian house and the refineries of Petit-Port.

Below, on the wide stone steps, stands Madame's brother, old Becker, his pen behind his ear, writing down the coming in and going out of the ingots in slim, leaden cases, for the Authemans were, at that time, gold merchants, and furnished almost all the jewellers throughout France with the rough ore, while in the large *salon* of the *rez-de-chaussée*, the old lady, perched at a desk in the form of a pulpit, watched the scales, the purchases and the sales, and called out to some clerk in her sharp, hard voice, rising high above the rattle of the gold and the discussions going on all about her :

"Moses, go over that again. You have ten centigrammes too much."

But all this is changed since the death of the mother, after which the placques of black marble on either side of the door were taken down. On this marble, in gold letters, were inscribed the words—"Maison Autheman. Founded in 1804. Gold bought and sold."

To-day the house is only a Bank, and manipulates the public fortune without drays or lead cases. Madame Jeanne Autheman's *coupé* is all that echoes through the courtyard, and the morning that Lina crossed its threshold to carry her translation, she was struck by the majestic silence of these old walls. The *concierge* wore the long coat and the white cravat of a sexton in the Temple. When she ascended the old stone steps with the dim, religious light due to the irregularity in the construction of the windows, the bell that announced her, awakened so many echoes in that solemn atmosphere, that her heart beat with a certain indefinable emotion.

Anne de Beuil, who received her with a certain *brusquerie*, said severely, in a quick voice, and with a severe glance from under her heavy brows, that the *Presidente* would see her presently.

"You have the Prayers? Give them to me." And she disappeared through a huge door.

Eline seated herself on a wooden bench, like others arranged around the hall and huddled together at the extreme end of the room before an harmonium draped with green serge. The stained-glass windows admitted so little light, that the girl could not well distinguish



this strange place, nor read what was written on the old woodwork, on which was formerly painted Cupids scattering roses, as well as Flora and Pomona with their especial attributes. These paintings had been covered with a coat of dark paint as more in keeping with the furniture and hangings.

From the next room came complaints, sighs and sobs, the murmur of a scolding voice. And moving hastily away that she might not hear this noise that distressed her, her movements in this room where she believed herself alone awakened some one, and a voice close to her side called out:

“Moses! Moses! go over that again!”

A little light came through the door that was opened just then, and showed her a parrot in a huge cage, an aged parrot with tangled plumes and sharpened beak. The creature was certainly calculated to strengthen the popular belief in the longevity of these birds.

“The *Presidente* is waiting for you, Mademoiselle,” said Anne de Beuil, crossing the room, accompanied by a tall, haggard creature whose eyes looked red even under her travelling veil. Suddenly the parrot saw this person and screamed:

“Ah! miserable wretch of a heretic—”

Anne rushed to the cage and carried it off, shaking it so violently that the water and seeds flew in every direction, while the unhappy bird in its broken voice and with its usual obstinacy, called “Moses! Moses!” as strong as he could, and bade her go once again over her account.

Lina entered the presence of Madame Autheman,

whom she found seated at her desk, in a cabinet, like a business man. Her brow was narrow and well rounded, under smooth, black hair. The nose was delicate and the mouth compressed.

"Be seated, my child."

Her voice had all the coldness of her complexion—of her fading youth. Erect as a clergyman, she was dressed in a black untrimmed robe as worn by Anne de Beuil, but in richer material. She wrote slowly and regularly; when the letter was finished she sealed it, and then rang the bell and gave a bundle of letters to the servant who entered, pointing out each in a curt and imperious tone: "For London; Guernsey; Zurich; Port Sauveur." It was like mail day in a great commercial house.

Then, tired with all she had done, she leaned back in her high office chair, and crossing her hands over her pelerine, looked at Eline with a tender smile which imparted to her eyes a bluish light like the reflection on a glacier.

"And this is the little wonder!" she said, and then began to pay her extravagant compliments upon the translations that she had looked at. Never had any one of her books been so well understood and rendered with so much intelligence and precision. She hoped that Eline "would do a great deal of work for her. By the way, I must pay you," she added.

She took her pen and made the calculation on the corner of the blotter as quickly as a regular accountant could have done. Six hundred prayers at fifteen centimes—so much for the German—so much for the

English. She handed the young girl a check for the amount which she was to get cashed below at the Bank. Then when Lina rose to go she begged her to be seated that she might talk a little about the mother she had known at Madame Bourlon's, and of the poor dear grandmother who had been taken away so suddenly. "At least," she said to Eline, looking her full in the face with her clear gray eyes: "At least, she learned to know her Saviour before she died?"

Lina did not know how to reply. This *Presidente* seemed to know every detail of their daily life, and the girl, moreover, was incapable of falsehood. It was true that her grandmother was not a professor of religion. During the last year, especially, either through indifference or superstitious fear, she had never spoken of religion, but seemed to cling more closely to the material part of her existence to which she was so soon to bid farewell. Then came the sudden end—the clergyman coming when all was over—the dressing her for the grave, the white sheet stretched over the cold body. No, it could not be said that grandmother had learned to know her Saviour before her death.

"Ah! poor soul, deprived of the glory of God!" With clasped hands Madame Autheman rose from her chair, and in an oratorical voice began to speak:

"Where art thou now, poor wandering soul? How thou art suffering! How terrible are thy curses upon those who left thee without help—"

She continued to speak, but Eline ceased to hear. At first the girl had simply an awkward feeling—then her heart began to ache and tears came to her eyes at

the thought that her grandmother was suffering, and through her fault.

Under the severe exterior of Eline Ebsen slept the sentimental mystical nature of the women of the North. "Grandmother is suffering!" Her heart swelled and burst from its childish bonds, in tears that choked her, and stained her fair face and disfigured its rounded outlines.

"Come, come, calm yourself."

Madame Autheman went to her and took her hand. She knew through Monsieur Birk that Eline had good feelings and that she fulfilled in a worldly way, all her Christian duties, but God exacted more than this especially from her, who lived surrounded by so much indifference. She must acquire Faith. Faith for those who lacked it—Faith that should be large and high and overhanging like a great tree, in which the birds of Heaven made their nests. How should she gain this Faith? By seeking spiritual companionship—souls are bound together only in Christ.

"Come to see me often," she said, "either here or at Port-Sauveur. I shall be glad to welcome you. We have prayer meetings in Paris, too, and very soon one of my *workers*," she emphasized the word, "the one you saw just now as she was going out, will make a public declaration of her faith. You will come—you will hear her, her appeal will strengthen your zeal. Now go, my time is brief."

She raised her hand—it might have been with a gesture of dismissal—it might have been in benediction.

"Above all," she continued, "do not weep. I will

recommend you to Him who saves and pardons." She spoke in an assured tone as of some one who never refused her anything.

Eline left the *Presidente* in a state of almost uncontrollable agitation. In her trouble she forgot the check she wished to cash, and was obliged to turn back and seek one of the three high doors, the glass in which was half covered with green baize. Within, there were the usual indications of a Banking house, with its windows and its gratings—the crowd going in and coming out, and the clash of gold and silver. But here as well as above, whence she had just come, there was an air of austerity, a certain stiffness in the manner of the employés, and the same dark paint covering the ceiling and the walls, hiding the allegories which had once been the glory of the Hôtel Autheman. She was sent to an especial window over which were the words "Port-Sauveur." From within a grating, behind the cashier, a man lifted his head as the check was timidly presented, and showed a melancholy face with hollow eyes and swollen cheek, under a band of black silk, which imparted to his profile an expression of mingled bitterness and sadness. Eline said to herself, "It is Autheman. How ugly he is!"

"Is he not?" the faint smile of the Banker seemed to ask, as he met her eyes.

Lina was haunted all the way home by the memory of this smile on this leper-like face, and she asked herself over and over again how a young girl could ever have made up her mind to give herself to a husband like that.

Was it through compassion, that pitiful love with which some women are inspired for the unfortunate! The rigid Protestant whom she had seen, seemed to be above all such weaknesses, as well as too devoted to be influenced by the sordid question of money.

Then, what was it? But to explain the mystery of this strange nature—of this breast as closely shut as a Protestant Temple is during the week, abandoned to solitude and emptiness, it is necessary to know the history of Jeanne Châtelus, the former pupil of the Pensionnat de Bourlon.

She was a Lyonnaise and the daughter of a wealthy silk merchant. Châtelus & Trellard was the firm, one of the most important in the city. She was born at Brotteaux, facing the broad Rhône, which, gay and joyous when it enters Arles and Avignon to the sound of bells and the hum of grasshoppers, borrows from the Lyonnaise mists, and from the skies heavy with rain, the dingy hue of its waters, while at the same time losing nothing of its tempestuous rush. The river is an excellent picture of these people who are cold and yet violent, with a certain melancholy exaltation. Jeanne's nature corresponded with her birthplace and was still more developed by circumstances.

The mother had died young, the father was always absorbed in business, the education of the child had therefore been confided to an old aunt, a strict Protestant, narrow-minded and fanatical, a slave to the religious observances of her faith. No amusements were sanctioned—no outside interests permitted. On Sunday they went to the Temple, or in winter when it

rained, and it often rained at Lyons, family worship was held in the grand *salon*, never opened except on these occasions, when the father, the aunt, the English governess and the servants seated themselves on the furniture dismally draped in linen covers.

The aunt read long prayers with a nasal twang, to which the father listened with one hand over his eyes, apparently absorbed in religious contemplation; but really thinking of his silk sales, and little Jeanne, a serious child with her mind filled with ideas of death, chastisement and original sin, lifted her eyes from her Christian meditation only to see through the misty window panes, the broad turbid Rhône rushing violently past, tossed and foaming like the ocean after a storm.

This education made the child as she approached womanhood very frail and nervous. Mountain air was ordered for her, and several seasons was spent at Montreux, near Geneva, one of those green places which seem imbued with all the sadness of the Lakes of the Quatre-Cantons.

When Jeanne was eighteen they went to Grindenvald, among the Bornese Alps, a little village lying at the foot of the Wetterhorn, the Silberhorn and the Jungfrau, whose dazzling summit towered above a multitude of snow-covered peaks and glaciers. Excursions come there to breakfast with guides and horses and all day long there is a constant coming and going through the one street, rugged and steep. Tourists arrive and depart, alpenstock in hand, or form caravans that disappear one by one in the winding paths; accom-

panied by the flutter of blue vails and emphasized by the measured tread of the animals:

Aunt Châtelus had discovered at the end of the Hôtel garden a little chalet, which was out of the way of the excursionists. It was charmingly situated, facing a pine wood; the delicious fresh breath from thence filled the sleeping rooms with a resinous odor, beyond was the region of eternal snow, where rainbows appeared from time to time, delicate flushes of pale rose and deep cold blue.

There was not a sound save the distant rush of a mountain torrent over stones, the *cantilène*, that is to say, the five notes of the Alpine horn echoing among the forests and the rocks, or the sudden thunder of an avalanche, mingled with the report of a cannon discharged in a grotto among the glaciers.

Sometimes in the night a storm arose, the wind blew from the north, and in the morning under the dazzling sky a fine dust of snow, whitened the mountain slopes; transparent like lace, it lay on the pine trees and the pasture land only to melt away in the warm sunshine into small streams like threads of silver which uniting among the moss and stones, formed miniature cascades.

But these wonders of Alpine nature were lost to Jeanne and her aunt, who passed their afternoons on the lower floor of the cottage in the society of pious English folks from Geneva, busy with the organization of their prayer meetings. The curtains were closely drawn, candles were lighted, canticles were sung and then each one of the ladies explained a text from the Bible as skillfully as any preacher.



Clergymen were by no means lacking, however, at the Jungfrau Hôtel, and there were also students of theology from Lauzanne and Geneva, but these gentlemen were almost all members of the Alpine Club, and were only interested in ascensions. They were seen going off in the morning with ropes and guides, while in the evening they rested, playing chess, reading the newspapers, and some of the youngest among them danced to the piano or sang comic songs.

"And these are clergymen!" said the old mummies, indignantly, shaking their faded hair or the bows on their shabby caps.

Ah! If they had been charged with the responsibility of disseminating the gospel, they would have brought more vigor to the blessed task. This dream of women as apostles came up in all their discussions. Why could there not be women priests as well as women physicians? The truth is, they might all have been taken for old clergymen, with their pale faces and loose robes which indicated no sex.

Jeanne Châtelus was impregnated with this envying mysticism, exaggerated with her by the ardor of her youth, and this girl of eighteen, pretty and restless, her black hair brushed smoothly over her broad brow, her firm lips and meditative expression, rising to expound the Holy Scriptures, was not the least curious feature of these meetings. Travellers lingered a little that they might hear her; and the servant at the chalet, a stout Swiss woman wearing a big cap, was so moved by what she heard that she wept over her sins, and dropped her tears into the morning chocolate,

talked to herself and prophesied, as she swept the rooms and scrubbed the corridors.

Many examples were cited of Jeanne's pious influence. A guide in the village, Christian Juebuit, was found at the bottom of a *crévasse*, after a terrible fall; he lived ten days in hideous agony, filling his hut with howls and blasphemies, in spite of all the visits and exhortations of the pastor. Jeanne went to see him, installed herself at the side of his cot gently, and patiently, reconciled this poor wretch to his Saviour, soothed him until he sank away into unconsciousness, like his marmot when it curled itself up among its dead leaves for its six months' hibernation.

This success intoxicated the young Lyonnaise. She believed herself to be selected for the Evangelical Mission, wrote Prayers and Meditations, spent all her evenings in seclusion, and affected the greatest austerity of demeanor. She spoke at all the meetings and interlarded all her discourses with texts and Biblical quotations.

"A woman lost the world, a woman shall save it." This ambitious device which she adopted later on her note paper, and had inscribed on her rings and bracelets, where other women place a tender sentiment or cipher of a loved one—was even then vaguely formulated in her young head, and the work of the "*Dames Évangélistes*" was germinating there as well, indistinctly and perhaps overshadowed at that time by a thousand confused projects, when an accident determined her life.

Among the ladies who attended the meetings was a

Genevèse who showed her especial kindness, the mother of a Theological student—a broad shouldered fellow intended for a foreign mission, and who, while waiting for the time when he should carry the Gospel among the Bassoutos, climbed every mountain peak in the vicinity, made long excursions on foot and horseback, and *yodled* with all his strength like any shepherd of the Oberland.

The Genevèse saw in Jeanne Châtelus, whom she knew to be rich, the very wife she desired for her son, and adroitly interested the girl by extolling the heroism of the young missionary, who was ready to give up all and follow Jesus. What joy it would be if her poor child, before expatriating himself should find a wife, a truly Christian woman who would consent to follow him on his Evangelical mission, to aid him, and support him if necessary. What a noble existence for a woman. What a field for her! When this idea had been carefully placed in Jeanne's mind, it made its way alone like one of those darning beads which children place inside their sleeves and which climbs higher and higher with each movement of the arm. Accident came to the aid of this maternal shrewdness, for the young people did not oppose her. Little as the thoughts of Mademoiselle Châtelus were on the earth, it is quite probable that the fine figure of the young Theologian, his dark energetic face under the little white cap worn by the Universities of Geneva had impressed her favorably. By degrees she began to think of him, he became the central figure in her projects for the future, and she grew uneasy at his frequent and dan-

gerous ascensions, and when he did not come back in the evening, gazed from her window at a twinkling light far up on the mountain, a light that indicated one of those little places of refuge which the Alpine club built under all the peaks, and where excursionists were sure of finding a fire and a bed of hard planks.

The young girl, cold as she was, said in her heart, "He is there! He is there! Nothing has happened to him." And then she fell asleep, happy, and a little surprised at herself. Surprised, that she, a motherless child, who had been brought up with care but without tenderness, and whose sentiments had hitherto been limited to loving God and hating sin, should feel her heart moved other than by Jesus. Religious passion, nevertheless, had a large part in this love.

When they became engaged on the shore of the *Mer de Glace*, in the presence of that vast mass of congealed waves, their words would not have been out of place in the Temple. Here were protestations and promises as cold as the North wind which even in September blew with a keenness that spoke of winter and made it difficult to breathe.

They swore to belong to each other, to live only to spread the gospel, the glory and the words of the One Living God. Their words were drowned by the crash of the stones that rolled down under their feet, tarnishing with their gray dust the blue crystals of the glacier.

He had yet another year to study. She during this time would also toil and prepare herself for her sacred

mission, and they would write to each other every week. When this was all settled they stood for a moment hand in hand, without speaking. The Genevese, more collected than his companion, raised his collar with a shiver. She, however, was burning with the fever of a proselyte, and her cheek glowed with as deep a flush as that lingering on the summit of the Jungfrau from the setting sun.

They wrote to each other for a year—letters which were a strange mixture of love and theology, suggestive of the correspondence of Héloïse and her master, corrected and chilled by Protestantism; and as Jeanne was sincere in her determination to consecrate herself to her mission, she went to study English and geography in Paris, under Madame de Bourlon, meaning to pass there the few months remaining before her marriage.

Singular as she appeared to these wealthy, coquettish Parisian girls, she nevertheless made a deep impression upon them through her unhesitating declarations of faith, her sybilline utterances, and the story of her approaching marriage and departure.

This interest was increased by the fact that she led a somewhat secluded life—having certain privileges which the other girls did not enjoy. She had a small room to herself, quite at the end of the corridor, where two or three of her friends among the older girls spent the evening with her.

There, as under the trees in the hour of recreation, Jeanne spread the good news, exerted the magnetic power of her voice and her eyes, and with her indo-

mitable passion for proselyting, she formed certain intimacies with that express intention. One of these was with Deborah Becker, a tall Jewess with copper-colored hair, the niece of the widow Autheman.

Under her soft brunette skin this pretty Deborah carried something of the hereditary taint in the blood of these gold merchants. At certain seasons her arms became inflamed and looked as if she had scratched them among the thorns of rose bushes, and she was obliged to remain several days in the Infirmary covered with ointments and washes.

The other boarders, jealous of her immense fortune, said, "She sweats with the Autheman gold!" But Jeanne saw it differently, and pointed out to her that it was a chastisement of an angry God laid heavily on a race, obstinate in their determination not to know Him, and she tormented this feeble nature with sermons and long theological controversies—even under the shadows of Petit-Port, at the widow Autheman's, where Deborah often took her friend. The faith of this daughter of Israel was shaken; she was ready to abjure it and leave her father and her family to follow Jeanne, and live with her and her husband under a tent, like Paul in the desert.

Such was, at this early age, the work of Jeanne, the *Évangéliste*. She labored to wrench hearts from their natural ties, and to offer them to Jesus quivering and bleeding.

In the meantime a commercial crisis had overtaken the Place de Lyon. Châtelus & Trellard were completely ruined, and the matrimonial prospects of the

young Theologian were entirely changed. Other reasons than the true one were of course given for the rupture. It was said that the health of the future missionary would not permit the incessant and severe travelling that was necessary. It was also said that he also realized the fact that his modest parish in the Canton d'Appenzell was no field for the great apostolic aptitudes of Mademoiselle Châtelus.

Jeanne made no complaint and allowed no one to suspect how humiliating was this rupture, and how terrible the blow was to her. During the two months which she remained at Madame de Bourlon's, no one but Deborah knew of the sudden change in her destiny. She continued her commentaries on the Bible to the great edification of her tall companions, and concealed under an air of great serenity a feeling of utter despair and a thorough contempt for men and life. A yawning abyss was opened in her soul by this, her first great disappointment.

Her health was shattered, but her head survived the disaster. And the mystic fire on her brow was once more illuminated. Her religious fervor grew apace, but all tenderness had left her soul, which had become bitter and implacable. Her favorite texts were now those of malediction and chastisement.

She still cherished the dream of the Evangelization of the world, but with it was a sullen anger at the impossibility of doing anything without money. How could she, alone and penniless, find her way to these infidels?

She thought of becoming one of the deaconesses in

the Rue de Reuilly; but the rules of the house were very stringent, and she knew that the first duty of these semi-nuns was to visit the sick and the afflicted. The care of poor suffering humanity was repulsive and loathsome to her; it struck her, moreover, that to pity such, savored of irreligion, since wounds, physical and moral, are so many trials which should be blessed to us by bringing us nearer God. What then should she do?

One Tuesday she was summoned to the parlor, where she found Madame Autheman in her ordinary white hood and long gloves. She had heard of the rupture with the missionary, and had come to ask Jeanne to marry her son. The girl asked for a week for consideration. She had often seen him at Petit-Port. He was a tall, silent fellow, greatly saddened by the disfigurement of his face, and always trying, as he sat at table, to conceal with his hand the black band that covered his cheek. As often happens, when faces are partially veiled or masked, the eyes of this young man had gained immensely in expression.

Jeanne thought of him without the smallest repugnance. Men were all much the same to her now; she liked one quite as well as another. They were all deformed, within or without, physically or mentally.

She was, nevertheless, greatly tempted by the money. A colossal fortune would be at her disposal; she could spend as much as she pleased in pious labors. In fact she would have accepted the proposal at once, but for the fact of Autheman being a Jew. But an hour's conversation with the young man, who was much in



love, removed this objection, and her scruples. The marriage took place in the Temple instead of at the Synagogue, to the great scandal of all Israel.

As soon as she was married, Jeanne began her work of Evangelization in Paris, much as if she were in Kaffir land. She was aided by all the resources of a large fortune, for the banking house was open to her, and the tall chimney of Petit-Port smoked night and day. Gold, liquefied in crucibles and carts, thundered away from the door, heavy with ingots—enough to buy the souls of the universe.

She held prayer meetings in her *salon* in the Rue Rivoli, and Madame Autheman heard every night, as she ascended the stairs, loud psalm singing to the accompaniment of an harmonium. She met, in the hall and in the corridors, strange female figures wrapped in rusty or ragged waterproofs, bespattered with mud or dripping with rain. These were the faithful but poor and needy members of the catechism class. The old lady was greatly astonished at the severe life led by her daughter-in-law. She could not understand this renunciation of the world in so pretty and so young a woman.

Her son, however, was happy and contented, and that was quite enough. It is possible, moreover, that she regarded all this as offering greater security to the poor fellow, and, therefore, instead of placing any obstacle in the path of her daughter-in-law, she facilitated all her plans.

Ah! she little thought that one of the first and most ardent converts made by Jeanne was Autheman

himself, and that he was only waiting for his mother's death to set him free and permit him to make a public renunciation of the faith of his fathers.

When the time finally arrived, one of the great events of the close of the empire was the reception of the Israelite Autheman into the Temple, and from that day the half veiled and disfigured face of the well known banker was seen every Sunday among the elders and deacons, in front of the pulpit.—

His conversion naturally gave Jeanne great weight among these people.

She came to be looked upon as the Madame Guyon of Protestantism. She was rigid and austere in her daily life, and persevered in her work, greatly esteemed and respected even by those who looked upon her acts and faith as the sheerest fanaticism.

In order to pursue her work and carry the gospel into all quarters of Paris, she hired in the most crowded districts, great halls where she preached regularly on certain days in the week. At first she had as acolyte and apostle only one old maid, a woman who had formerly had the charge of the linen room at Madame de Bourlon's. She was a rabid Calvinist, and came of a family originally of gentle blood, who had been driven into peasant life and habits by religious persecution.

The faith of this Anne de Beuil savored much of the fierce fanaticism of the Reform at the time of the wars. Her eyes were keen, suspicious and restless, her soul as ready for martyrdom as for battle, and entertaining equal contempt for death and ridicule.

She was in the habit, on such days as Anne preached, of entering work shops, cabarets and manufactories, there, in her harsh voice and provincial accents, she loudly called sinners to repentance.

The hôtel in the Rue Pavée was entirely changed in appearance. Jeanne retained the banking house, but got rid of the traffic in gold, which savored too strongly of Judaism. Uncle Becker went elsewhere with his business, and the establishment at Petit-Port, or at Saint Sauveur rather, was transformed into a Temple and Evangelical schools.

Very soon, of the old Autheman mansion there remained very little except the ancient parrot which had belonged to the old mother, and which was therefore held in great veneration by the banker. Anne de Beuil hated the bird with the most vindictive spite, and frequently shook the cage with great violence. The poor creature was exiled from room to room as seemed best to his persecutor, who regarded it as the last of a race of reprobates and the living image of the old gold vender. It had her wooden voice, and its bill the true curve of the Hebraic nose.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE LOCK.

“**R**OMAIN! There is Romain!” This joyous exclamation came from the lips of little Fanny, as the train stopped at the Albion station, and caused every face to turn to the window. These faces were all bright and gay, and belonged to Parisians who had rushed away from the city to spend their Easter Monday in the sunshine and fresh air of the country.

Romain's appearance, his mouth opening from ear to ear in one broad grin, increased the general good humor. From one end to the other of the train, ran the words in every key and modulation of tone:

“Romain! There is Romain! Good day, Romain! How are you, Romain?”

The lock-keeper for one brief minute of his life enjoyed the delicious intoxication of popularity. “Good gracious! What do they mean?” asked Sylvanire almost in terror, as she hurried from the car with Fanny in her arms.

“It is all right my dear, they are only amusing themselves, but *cré cochon*, I don't mind, I am having my own fun as well!”

Then standing on tiptoe he pressed a kiss on his wife's fresh cheek, which redoubled the delight of the spectators in the cars. Then he rushed forward to

assist Madame Ebsen and her daughter, but was forestalled by Lorie, who was also of the party.

The former Sub-Préfet placed the ladies on the ground with the same air of deference and respect with which he had received the empress when she landed at the Quai de Cherehell.

"And Maurice?" asked Fanny, looking eagerly about for her brother.

"Master Maurice is at the lock, I left him with Baraquin to give him a little assistance. This way, sir. This way, ladies."

Heavily burdened with the shawls and possessions of the whole party, the lock-keeper started off on a brisk little trot just as the train puffed out of the station and a hundred voices shouted:

"Romain! Good-bye, Romain."

Sylvanire after worrying for some time over the miserable face that Maurice bent over his book, decided that he must be sent into the country. She went to Lorie, who consented, all the more willingly because with his utilitarian ideas he saw that Maurice might be learning something that would be useful to him in his future career as a naval man.

Maurice had been at the lock about three weeks, when his friends taking advantage of a day when there were neither lessons nor work at the Department, had come to see him.

How proud was Romain on receiving his former Préfet and these two ladies! What joy to receive Sylvanire in the conjugal dwelling where perhaps—but hush! this was a great secret between the husband and wife.

An omnibus runs between Albion and Petit-Port for all the trains, but Romain, who wished to do everything in great style, had his boat there—a large boat neatly painted green, in which he soon established the party.

The little girl sat between Madame Ebsen and Eline. Lorie was on the seat opposite Sylvanire in front, which she filled to overflowing with her blue dress—of that blue which has become almost a livery, so commonly is it worn with fluted caps among the servants of Paris.

Romain, quick and agile, leaped into the boat and pushing it off with his foot, took up the oars. The boat was heavy and the tide against him.

“You have a hard row before you, Romain,” said the Sub-Préfect.

“Ah! Never you fear, Monsieur Lorie.”

And the little man braced himself laughing and blushing in the sunlight. As he rowed he threw back his curly head until it almost touched his wife’s knees.

He pulled with regular adroitness directly into the middle of the river, where the current ran with especial swiftness.

“Is Petit-Port on the other side?” asked Lorie in some surprise.

“Oh! no, sir. I only want the chain.”

No one understood what he meant until they saw him suddenly lay down his oars and snatching up his boat hook he caught the last of a long line of barges which went down the river at this hour every morning, drawn by a steam tug.

It was certainly a most delicious mode of navigation. There was no fatigue and no jar. The pulsation of the

machinery and noise on the barges were transformed by distance into a low monotonous murmur floating off to the shore with the foam on the water.

Pretty white houses on either bank surrounded by gardens in which plumes of half blown lilacs nodded in the breeze, appeared in rapid succession, all glorified by the blue sky and by the youth of the day and the year.

"How comfortable we are!" said little Fanny with her arm around Eline; and this little childish voice expressed the feelings of the whole party.

For the first time since their recent sorrow the young girl's face was flushed with the hue of health. Her smiles testified to her enjoyment of this contact with nature, a contact which invariably soothes and consoles. Madame Ebsen, like all people who have lived long and worked hard, had a keen appreciation of this day of rest and relaxation.

Lorie watched the blonde hair about the girl's fair temples and on her neck, lifted in the gentle breeze, and as he looked at little Fanny he felt glad that something of himself was leaning against Eline's heart.

But after all, the happiest of the party was certainly Romain, who was seated close to his wife and talking to her in a low voice.

"There is Petit-Port!" he suddenly exclaimed, pointing as he spoke to the red roofs scattered over side hills, as yet a little bare, on which were the vegetable gardens, which above Albion cover the left bank of the Seine.

"In a quarter of an hour we shall be at the lock."

The boat had now reached a seigniorial looking man-

sion, with its balustraded roof and its long rows of windows, its carefully trimmed shrubbery and its half moon of turf surrounded by stone pillars and iron chains outside its great gates.

Beyond extended an immense park, running along the bank of the river. The park was thickly wooded, but as the foliage was still very thin the party in the boat caught a glimpse of a flight of stone steps half in ruins and overgrown with grass. They saw, too, gleaming white among the trees, a large stone cross, which they supposed indicated a family tomb or a chapel.

This cross was unquestionably new.

"That is the Autheman Château," answered Romain, when he was asked what this place was.

"Then it is Port-Sauveur?" said Eline quickly.

"Exactly, Mamzelle. That is what the people in the village call the Château. It is a queer little place, that same village, let me tell you. I think you might search long, indeed all through France, before you could find its like!"

An inexplicable sense of uneasiness and discomfort now took possession of the young girl. The spring sunshine lost its brilliancy. The delicious odor of violets faded away. She recalled her visit to the Rue Pavée and the reproaches of Madame Autheman in regard to her grandmother's death.

She could not turn her eyes from those closed shutters, from that profound and mysterious park, above which towered this funeral cross. What strange chance had brought her here? Or was it chance? Might it not be a higher will, a warning sent by God?



By this time the progress of the boat had carried them so far beyond the terraced mansion that it had lost its character of mystery, and now the foam on the river told that the lock was near.

Romain pointed out to S<sup>y</sup>vanire a small house that looked no bigger than a thimble, while its doors and windows were mere black specks.

"Home, at last," he said in a whisper, to Sylvanire, as he detached the boat from the chain and rowed toward the *Quai*.

Maurice, busy on the jetty with the assistant lock-keeper, saw them from a distance; he ran to meet them with shrieks like a Caribbean Indian, waving his cap, on which the anchors and gold braid were tarnished by the water and the sun. He himself was bronzed, hale and hearty, "like an old sailor!" said Romain.

"Hallo, Maurice, the *Borda!*" cried the father, gayly, without noticing the startled expression that came to the boy's face on being thus suddenly recalled to his vocation.

They reached the house of the lock-keeper, a cottage raised two or three steps on account of the spring floods; on one side was a vegetable garden, kept in most perfect order. There was one large room with two iron beds for the lock-keeper and his assistant. In a corner was a wooden frame containing the telegraphic paraphernalia which controls all the locks on the Seine. On one side was the kitchen, bright with utensils which had never been used.

"You understand," said Romain, "so long as I am

a bachelor—" and he went on to tell how he ate at the *Affameur*—a restaurant a few rods away, renowned for its vegetable soups and its fish *à la casserole*.

It was there he had ordered breakfast. He then opened the door of a room opposite the kitchen into which he introduced his guests with much mystery. The place was dark, but when he opened the blinds there was a general exclamation of surprise. There was a beautiful mahogany bedstead, a pretty carpet covered with roses, a dressing-bureau and a mirror which reflected a variety of trifles picked up at fairs, and flowers cut out of yellow paper; while on the walls were pasted colored pictures cut from magazines. This room was an immense surprise. It was for Sylvanire; the lock-keeper had purchased its furniture entirely with the savings from his salary, and had said nothing about it to his wife. He now told her that he was keeping the present until—until—

"It is very nice," said Sylvanire, hastily, fearing that he would say too much, and then drew him away, leaving the ladies to arrange their hats, with which the fresh breezes of the Seine had played sad havoc.

Later, Fanny left alone with Eline and her mother, said to them in a mysterious tone: "I know very well why Romain is so pleased. It is because he and Sylvanire will live here together when we have a new mamma."

Eline started.

"A new mamma! Who has mentioned such a thing to you?"

"Sylvanire, this morning, when she was dressing me. But hush! It is a great secret."

She ran away to join her brother, who called her at that moment.

The two women looked at each other.

"He can keep a secret, it seems," said Madame Ebsen, with a smile.

Eline was indignant. "What folly! The idea of his marrying at his age!"

And her hand trembled as she adjusted the long jet pin in her hair.

"But Linette, Monsieur Lorie is not old, he is hardly forty, and does not look that much; and then he is so very distinguished in his appearance."

Only forty! And Eline supposed him to be much older. Probably his serious manner, his great gravity of demeanor, gave her this impression.

Of course this unexpected announcement of his approaching marriage was of interest to her only as it concerned the manner in which his child was likely to be treated. What kind of a woman was he to marry? And who was this person? Eline had never heard him speak of any one. He never went out, he never saw anybody.

"We must make him talk," said Madame Ebsen, in reply to these observations. "We have the whole day before us for that."

When the ladies went down to the jetty they found Romain explaining to Monsieur Lorie the systems of the locks, the sluices raised and lowered by levers, the iron cramps by which he descended to repair under water the doors of the dam. "Wonderful invention, these locks, *cré cochon*." Formerly during the three

summer months the poor sailors were out of work, and in the river language, this lost time, when the women and children were crying with hunger, and the men comforted their empty stomachs at the wine shop, was called the *Famine*, hence the name of the restaurant. But nowadays there was as much water in the summer as at any time, and the work kept on all through the year.

Lorie listened to the explanations and followed the demonstrations with the gravity of a Sub-Préfet inspecting the public works of his district.

Eline did not listen; she was thinking of this child who had come to fill the blank in her life, and of the instinct of maternity which had begun to stir within her. She was like a mother to Fanny in her indefatigable patience, her anxiety and watchfulness; not only did she now concern herself with the child's studies, but also with the cut of her little dresses, the shape of her hats, and the shade of the ribbon that tied her hair.

All these things were now left entirely to her, *Sylvanire* having abdicated in favor of her good taste and grace, and now—

There was a loud, shrill whistle. The sailors hurried back to the shore, and presently the tug-boat with its black and white chimney again came puffing into sight drawing its long train of boats; it passed through the lock, the gates were closed again, shutting in the enormous mass of water, and the tug disappeared, the chain of boats undulating like the tail of a serpent.

Before leaving the jetty the lock-keeper presented *Baraquin*. the fellow he called his boy, a somewhat

juvenile appellation for the tanned, wrinkled face of this old mariner of the Seine, who walked sideways like a crab because of the rheumatism which distorted all his limbs. The old man grunted forth a few words of welcome which seemed to come from his boots.

Romain, and this was a very decided trait in the man's character, never drank a drop of either brandy or wine. As a young man he had been, as he had said with an air of pride, "the greatest sot in the fleet," but having knocked down his captain one day when tipsy, he had been tried by a court martial; he then swore never to drink again, and kept his word, notwithstanding the jests of his companions, their wagers, and the temptations they threw in his path.

At present the mere sight of a glass of wine turned his stomach; he had instead taken a great fancy to all sorts of sweet drinks, orgeats and syrups, and it was pretty hard for him that his companion was almost always under the influence of liquor.

"But after all, it is not his fault," said the lock-keeper, guiding his companion toward the restaurant. "It is the Château that is to blame. Ever since they have changed their religion at the Château the old man has had much more money than he needed."

"I don't understand you—"

"Why, every time he goes to Communion at the Temple the lady of Petit-Port gives him forty francs and a coat; that is what has ruined him!"

The inn was a little higher up than the lock and was approached by a series of terraces, on which were

displayed all kinds of open air games. Quoits, and bowling, a swing, a trapeze and ropes.

As the party entered they were greeted by an appetizing odor of the soup that was prepared daily; Madame Damour, the hostess, was laying their table in a private room where everything was delightfully clean. The hostess, equally neat, with a face so grave that it was almost severe, would not have taken so much pains except for Romain, who was a great favorite of hers.

In a low voice, the lock-keeper told his guests how no people were gayer in past days than these Damours, but they had lost a daughter, a beautiful girl, about the age of Mademoiselle Eline.

The man in his grief turned for solace to drink, and ended among the insane at Vacluse, while his wife now left alone had not any heart to laugh.

"Of what did this poor girl die?" asked Madame Ebsen with a shiver, as she turned to look at her pretty nineteen year old daughter.

"It is said," answered Romain, mysteriously, "that the lady of Petit-Port gave her something to drink that hurt her."

And in reply to the gesture of indignant protest made by the young girl, Romain added:

"Wait a bit. That is what the mother says, and it is certain that the girl died at the Château and the people hereabouts have not ceased talking about it yet, though it occurred years ago."

The hostess now appeared with a frying pan still red from the fire, in which was a magnificent tench,

caught by Romain in the regulation reserve of two hundred yards attached to his lock, and the odor of the dish, and the appetite gained by the morning on the water, made a diversion in the conversation. The local and sinister legend was blown away by the fresh wind that came from the Seine, and ruffled the surface of the river, upon which they looked from the windows, into a thousand silvery ripples; rainbow reflections danced over the glasses and the coarse, unbleached table cloth.

A bottle of Burgundy, the wine which sailors were in the habit of bringing to the restaurant and offering in payment for their meals, enhanced the *fête*, already gay with the children's laughter and Romain's intense happiness. He sat with Sylvanire at his side at a small table near the window, where there was room only for two. How happy he was, the brave little lock-master, over this breakfast with his wife, the first for two years, the first indeed since their wedding day.

But this did not prevent him from watching all that was going on, of going to and fro from the kitchen to the table to see that his guests wanted nothing, and even making the coffee in the Algerian fashion which his master had formerly liked. He placed the tray with an air of triumph on a long table that served as a dresser, but as he passed it there was an odd sound from under the linen covering.

"Hollo! a piano."

It was an old harpsichord bought at an auction sale at some one of the châteaux along the Seine. After playing for many a gavotte and minuet, the ancient harpsichord now served to amuse the Parisians on

Sundays in an inn. But under Eline's graceful touch, it momentarily regained something of its former grace, its sad notes corresponding with the yellow ivory of its keys.

When the young girl, who had not played since her mourning, began the *Retournelle* to the old national air, "Denmark with thy fields and meadows," one would have said that grandmother herself had called up a vision of the distant horizon of green pasture lands, swaying grain and bountiful Nature.

Then Eline played something from Mozart, sounding like the song of birds shut up in the piano, mingled with the ripple of running water. When this sonata was finished she played another, then another, yielding to the quaint charm of the old instrument. Then suddenly looking around she saw that she was alone with Lorie. Romain and Sylvanire had gone down to the shore to amuse the children; Madame Ebsen followed that she might weep more at her ease.

He had remained there continuing to listen to her; he was moved to the depths of his heart, infinitely more deeply than befitted a member of the Administration.

She was so pretty, animated as she was by the music: her eyes were bright and her fingers hovered and fluttered like butterflies over the keys. He would gladly have prolonged these delicious minutes and have remained there forever, with only her to look at. Suddenly a child's cry, a cry of terror, broke the silence of the sky and waters.

"It is Fanny," said Eline rushing to the window



with all the soft color gone from her cheeks, and Lorie leaning out discovered the cause of all the excitement. Romain dressed in his diver's suit was about to descend under the dam.

"Ah! how frightened I was!" said Éline, as she stood on the little balcony with her hand over her eyes, shading them from the sun that bathed her in light, and made a halo about her head.

"How good you are to that child!" murmured Lorie.

"Yes, for I love her as if she were my own; and the idea that she is to be taken from me causes me great grief."

He was startled, for Madame Ebsen had more than once alluded to the possibility of the girl's marriage, and he fancied that he was now to hear something more definite.

"Taken from you, and why?"

She hesitated a little, and looking off into the distance, she said:

"Because you are going to give her another mother."

"Who has said such a thing? I never have had any such idea."

Then he stopped. He could not say this before these dear questioning eyes now turned upon him. He had thought of it, of course, he went on to say, it was dismal to live alone, to have a home and no wife. Sylvanire would leave them some day, and at the best she could not take the place of a mother to these children. While as to himself, he frankly admitted that he could not manage a house, although perfectly capable to take the whole province of Algiers on his shoulders.

He said this very simply with some confusion, with a kind smile and with a certain simplicity that was not without its charm. Eline had never liked him better than now, while confessing that he was conquered by life and its cares. He was more agreeable to her in this way than when stiff and stately.

"This is why I have sometimes thought of marrying again, but I never spoke of it to a human being. May I ask who told you——"

Eline interrupted him.

"And is she nice?" she asked, "this person of whom you are thinking?"

And Lorie replied, all breathless:

"She is good, she is lovely, she is perfection!"

"Will she love your children?"

"She loves them already."

Eline understood and was completely silenced.

He took her hand and began to speak in a low voice without well knowing what he was saying, but amid all her trouble she recognized the music of a lover's words.

And while Lorie uttered these tender protestations and promises for the future, Eline stood with a dreamy expression in her eyes; looking off into the future, she saw the years unfold themselves as smooth and tranquil as this landscape before her, where the meadows were scarcely green and where alternate light and shadow played.

Perhaps she had dreamed of something else, of wider fields and more movement. Youth loves obstacles to be vanquished, the dangerous forests through which

Red Riding Hood made her way, and the tottering tower to which the bluebird flew. But this marriage now offered did not disturb any of her relations.

"I can keep Fanny, I need not leave my mother?" she said thoughtfully.

"No, never. I promise you that, Eline."

"Then I agree, I will be the mother of your dear children."

Without knowing how it had come to pass, they now stood united; in a minute their fates and futures were changed. Madame Ebsen, as she entered from the terrace, read the whole story when she saw them hand in hand, watching the children playing on the turf below.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## PORT-SAUVÉUR.

OF all the villages along the left shore of the Seine between Paris and Corbeil, and the pretty country places with sunny names, Petit-Port in spite of its plebian appellation is the only one with a history.

Like Albion, like Charenton, it was at the close of the Sixteenth Century an important Calvinist centre, one of those places of meeting granted to the Protestants of Paris by the edict of Nantes. Within the Temple of Petit-Port the names highest among the Protestants assembled every Sunday,—Sully, the Rohans, the Princess of Orange and others of equal importance. Then large and gorgeous carriages rolled up and down between the elms of the Pavée du Roi. Famous theologians preached in this Temple. Some fine baptisms and marriages with several astonishing abjurations took place there, but the glory was short lived.

At the Revocation the Calvinistic population was dispersed and the Temple seized.

When in 1832 Samuel Autheman came here to establish his refineries he found a little marshy village, obscure and unknown, with no other recollection of its own history, then immured in dusty archives, than the name given to a certain piece of ground known as the Prêche.

It was on the Prêche, therefore, precisely where the

former temple stood, that the workshops were erected, beyond the large estate purchased at the same time by the gold merchant, who was even then very rich.

The estate was as historical as the village, having belonged to Gabrielle d'Estrées, but of her time nothing remained but a double flight of stone steps, time-eaten and rusty, which ran up either side of a ruined arch, overhung with wild grape vines and ivy. "Gabrielle's steps," as they were called, brought up images of gallant lords and ladies, with jewels and satins flashing through the green leaves.

The trees in the park were undoubtedly contemporaries of the favorite, but trees do not speak like stones; they tell nothing, and lose their memories with their leaves at each season. All that was known of the former Château was that it stood on an elevation that overlooked the estate, while the servants' quarters were nearer the river, just where stands to-day the modern mansions of the Authemans.

Unfortunately, some years after their installation they, like all those persons whose estates were on the river banks between Paris and Corbeil, were forced to submit to the railroad which passed through so much fine property in that region.

The Orleans road went directly across the lawn, separating the flower beds and destroying two magnificent pawlonias that stood there; and at all hours of the day, trains dashed past with their hiss and spurt, leaving long billows of smoke behind. The passengers had a glimpse, through the small square windows of the car, of a terrace bordered with orange trees,

where the Autheman family, seated in low American chairs, were enjoying the fresh air, and beyond they saw stables of red bricks, hot-houses and a kitchen garden cut in two long strips by the railway.

When at the death of her mother-in-law, Jeanne found herself mistress of the fortune and of the will of her husband, she lingered at Petit-Port because of its Calvinistic associations, which seemed to herald its coming destiny. She changed the whole aspect of this country house as she had done that of the Paris mansion; she rebuilt the ancient Temple, and erected schools for both boys and girls. As the mechanics and refiners had all gone away with Uncle Becker to Romainville, there remained at Petit-Port only peasants, market gardeners, and the few tradespeople who could make a living in the village. It was among these last that Jeanne, seconded by Anne de Beuil, exercised her proselyting mania. Anne went from door to door promising the protection of the Château to all those who would go to the Temple, and would send their children to the Evangelical schools, which were free. On leaving these schools, positions were found for pupils according to the aptitude they displayed.

The religious convictions of peasants are hardly firm enough to resist such material advantages.

Some few children came at once, and their parents easily fell into the habit of accompanying them on Sunday to "meeting," as it was called. And Madame Autheman after officiating for some time alone, at what she called "family worship," engaged a pastor from Corbeil, who was old and timid. He it was who officiated

at weddings and funerals, and who administered the Holy Communion, but he was never more than obedient to orders. Jeanne was at the head of everything, and retained supreme authority over the church and schools. When this old man died at the end of some years, she had infinite difficulty in replacing him, notwithstanding her ample means and the esteem in which she was held by the Evangelical clergy. Pastors came one after the other to Petit-Port, and soon wearied of the subordinate position they were expected to hold, until the day when Jeanne met Monsieur Birk of the Scandinavian Church. He was thoroughly mercenary, was ready to do anything, and knew just enough French to read the Bible and perform the ceremonies.

Madame Autheman did the preaching and interpreted the verses. Can my readers picture the astonishment of the dull peasants when they saw the pretty lady ascend the pulpit steps. This lady spoke well, however, and as long as the most determined curé. Then this beautiful Temple, where everything was fresh and new, and which was moreover much larger than their parish church, the severe simplicity of the high walls, the authority of the name and the fortune of the banker, were all impressive facts.

They went away amazed and interested, and told all they had seen, and how young Madame Autheman "officiated at mass." After the service the Chatelaine remained in the vestry receiving those who wished to speak to her, encouraging them to tell her their affairs, advising them—not in mysterious language, but familiarly and with practical common sense.

It was at this time that she instituted a prize of money and clothing, payable on the day of Communion to all those who accepted the Reformed religion.

The mail carrier was the first, and then several more. Their "reception" was performed with great ceremony, and when they were seen dressed in a complete suit of good warm wool, with bright money rattling in their pockets, and were assured of the protection of the Château, others were naturally induced to follow their example.

To resist this determined Propagandism, there were at Petit-Port only the Curé and his sister.

The Curé, poor man, had lived a long time in this place—supporting himself, it was whispered, with the proceeds of his fishing, which his maid-servant sold secretly at the cabarets of Albion. Accustomed, beside, to the respect felt in the village for the wealth of the Authemans, it was certainly not he who would venture to oppose them in any way.

He nevertheless permitted himself to make some delicately veiled allusions on Sunday from his reading-desk, and he addressed a report to the Bishopry of Versailles; but this did not prevent his church from emptying like a cracked vase from which the water slowly oozed away. The catechism class became smaller and smaller, leaving plenty of room for delicious games of catch, between the benches, among the occasional boys who made their appearance.

More ardent, as women are apt to be when their passions are excited, was Sister Octavie. She was the directress of the girls' school, and took a determined



stand against the encroachments of the Château, making her brother ashamed of his weakness. She ran about the village—for she, too, had nowadays much idle time on her hands—with her *coiffe* fluttering, the beads of her huge rosary rattling at her side, and tried, when the Evangelical classes were dismissed, to reclaim her lost sheep.

“Are you not ashamed, you impudent children?” was her greeting to them.

She attacked the mothers at their washtubs, the fathers in their fields, invoked God, the Virgin and the Saints, pointed to the mystical sky, wherein the peasant sees nothing but the water and the sun needed for his harvests, and received in reply winks and hypocritical sighs.

“Yes, Sister, yes. I am sure you are right. It would be better as you say.”

It was a terrible scene when Sister Octavie and Anne de Beuil met. The two women were the types of the two religions—one was thin, sallow and austere, telling a tale in spite of the years that had elapsed, of revolt and persecution; the other plump and amiable, with dimpled hands.

The whole Château joined in the war against the Sister, therefore the contest was unequal. In her excitement Sister Octavie did not stop to measure or to choose her words. She did not content herself with ridiculing Madame Autheman and her preaching, but she brought against her very grave accusations, such as abducting children, and using all sorts of violent means, drugs and medicines to compel them to

abjure their religion. The inexplicable and sudden death of a young girl, Félicie Damour, a servant at the Château, caused these fables to be credited in some degree. There was even the beginning of a legal inquiry, which ended abruptly, however, and Sister Octavie was sent to another residence. She was not replaced.

The Curé was allowed to remain at his post; he lived quietly enough, interfering with no one—preaching regularly to an empty church, and remaining on agreeable terms with the Authemans, who occasionally sent him game at the proper season of the year.

“These people are too strong; you must manœuvre a little,” the Bishop had said to him, and thus released by his superior from all responsibility, the good Curé continued his fishing, and let the stream run as it would.

The village presented a singular appearance at this time.

Among the red-roofed houses, all exactly alike, erected by the former Autheman, for his workmen—among the small elms set out at right angles by his daughter-in-law, walked a large number of children, dressed all alike in blouses of black alpaca. This procession was headed by a teacher in a long coat, and by girls wearing the robe and pelerine affected by Anne de Beuil. All the people at the Château wore black also, relieved by a P. S. in gilt on the coat collar. The place reminded one of those villages of the Moravian brothers Herrnhout or Nieski, which are free communities, most curious in their organization; but the

devotion of these semi-religious fraternities is sincere, while the peasants of Petit-Port are abominable hypocrites. They know that their penitent faces are noticed, and that the Biblical phrases with which they interlard their peasant jargon are most acceptable.

Oh! This Bible. The air of all the country about there is impregnated with it. The walls of the Temple are covered with texts as are the outside walls of the school buildings, and texts are in all the shops of the tradespeople who are employed by the Château.

The baker has above his counter, "*Die here, that you may live there!*" and the grocer has written, on the walls of his shop, "*Set your heart on things above;*" now those things which are just above these words are bottles of prunes and jars of brandied cherries! But the peasants do not venture to touch these, they have the fear of Anne de Beuil and her police before their eyes. And when they wish to indulge in some little lark they go to Athis, or to Damour at the *Affameur*.

They are thieves and liars, indolent and cowardly, true peasants of the Seine-et-Oise, and content themselves with hiding their vices, but at the same time cherishing them with great care.

Petit-Port, this village of the Reformed religion, has curiously blazed up from its ashes after a lapse of some three hundred years. At the same time, other Protestant establishments have sprung to life in Versailles and Paris, at Plessy, and Mornay, but instead of being supported like these, by collections made in all the Temples in France and among the Evangelical churches

of England and America, Petit-Port, it is kept up by the Authemans. It belongs to them exclusively, and is under their entire control.

Jeanne Autheman is Pontiff-in-Chief, the occult influence behind Anne de Beuil's activity. Sometimes she is not seen in the village for eight months.

She spends her mornings with the voluminous correspondence, required by the work of the Evangelist ladies,—“The Work,” as she and her friends wrote it. She then receives the catechism class, after which she shuts herself up for the whole afternoon in “The Retreat,” the desolate *châlet* in the centre of the park, which had given rise to so much gossip.

On Sunday she is always at the schools and the Temple, the dreary white Temple whose heavy funeral cross seems to guard the estate, imparting to it a conventual aspect, increased and completed by the marvellous order of everything, by the exquisite neatness of the deserted avenues, and the religious hush of the mansion, where the windows are all closed, and where the shadow of a black, gliding form sharply defined on the gravel or on the stone steps, and distant waves of chants, and an organ, are all that break the repose and silent torpor of a long summer afternoon.

Toward evening the house becomes a trifle more animated. The gate is thrown open, wheels grind over the gravel, a great Scotch dog, old and decrepit, drags himself out to bark at a carriage. It is Autheman coming out from Paris in his coupé, preferring to spend an hour thus, rather than expose his unfortunate face

to the curiosity of the crowd at the station, which is always great at five o'clock. There is a momentary bustle, a door or two is shut, words are exchanged, a groom whistles as he gives his animals some water to drink, then the whole place relapses into a mournful silence which is only disturbed by the smoke and rattle of a passing train.

This morning, however, a morning in May, fresh and splendid, the Château presented a scene of extraordinary activity and animation.

Hail had fallen in the night during a terrible storm, and had greatly injured the trees, breaking down branches and limbs. Leaves and flowers were scattered over the lawn, mingled with broken glass from the hot-houses. The gardeners were all at work with their rakes and brushes; there was naturally a great deal of noise as the heavy limbs of trees were drawn over the gravel.

Gloved, and with his hat on his head, Autheman, always the first one up in the Château, as he was the first to arrive at the bank, was pacing the terrace with hurried step. He was absorbed in thought, and plainly greatly agitated.

He turned mechanically each time he reached the end of the terrace, glancing at the closed blinds of his wife's chamber. Suddenly he rang for a servant; when the lackey appeared, the banker asked if Madame Autheman had not yet come down stairs, and then walked away, smoothing and gently rubbing, with a gesture habitual to him when alone and preoccupied, the frightful deformity under the black band.

In this fresh and dewy morning he was like a phantom of evil, and it was thus that Eline Ebsen had seen him for the first time, behind the grating in his office, with this same sharp, scrutinizing glance and with this bitter smile on lips which seemed always asking the painful question:

“Hideous, is it not?”

Hideous! It was despair amid these luxurious surroundings, and this fixed idea had haunted him since his childhood.

Marriage and the possession of the woman he loved, had for a time cured him. As if reassured by this pretty arm resting on his own, he showed himself everywhere. He was seen at the Temple, at the Bourse and at the meetings of the *Consistoire*, of which he was one of the most active members. He had even consented to be made Mayor of Petit-Port.

Then all at once the former depression returned, and was more profound than ever. He retired from everything, shut himself up in his Château, or in the blue-curtained desk at the bank. There was no apparent cause for this return of low spirits—no disaster had affected his business, and his house went on as smoothly as ever.

He, deeply in love with his wife, yielded to all her extravagant demands for “the Work.” She, gentle and affectionate, as well as punctual to greet him when he went away or came back, lifted her fair brow to receive his caresses, at the same time informing herself of the operation and movement of business, for she was a true Lyonnaise, energetic and mystical.

She told him everything—the subject of her next sermon, the number of souls she had saved during the week, an account of which she kept in a huge ledger. But there was a certain alienation between them, although not a rupture. This was apparent in the absent replies made by the unfortunate man—in the earnest, pathetic eyes with which he endeavored to find, under his wife's smiling indifference, some sensitive point which he could reach.

Strangely enough, too, in a person as exacting in all her religious observances, she never asked him why he had withdrawn from the prayer meetings, and from the Temple, leaving his seat vacant on the bench of the elders, even on the three great Communions of the year. She seemed to avoid an explanation, which she did with her double instinct of woman and priest, while he was silent from pride and also from fear, lest he should darken this fair face, which was the only light of his life.

But to-day, Autheman had resolved to speak, and to say that which had been stifling him for three years. He waited, therefore, walking up and down, or leaning on the balustrade, watching the trains as they passed.

The morning Express!

This was announced by the quivering of the earth, all strewn as it was by broken flowers and green twigs, stripped from the trees by the storm of the previous night.

Near the pawlonias there was a bed of spring flowers, on which he would have liked to throw himself. It had been the dream of his youth to lie there

with his horrible cheek hidden—the cheek that nothing could cure.

And while these thoughts were passing through his head he leaned over the railing, seized by a vertigo—an almost irresistible temptation.

But the train had disappeared with an irate whistle, with brass glowing and glittering, with all its little windows that looked like one long one, and surrounded by a cloud of dust, sparks and whirling leaves.

After the train had passed it seemed as if the very air was hushed, while to the right and to the left stretched long lines of shining steel.

“My mistress, sir, bids me say that she is in the small *salon*.”

“I am coming,” Autheman replied, in the tone of a man just aroused from a terrible nightmare.

In a small *salon* in the *rez-de-chaussée*, where the furniture was covered in green satin and dated from the marriage of old Madame Autheman, Jeanne was deep in conference with Anne de Beuil, while at the same time snatching an uncomfortable breakfast. On a small table covered with books and papers, stood a bowl of coffee.

“Stay,” she breathed rather than said to her acolyte, who made a movement to depart when the banker entered.

Jeanne looked up into her husband’s face; their eyes met.

“Good morning. What a terrible storm we had in the night!”

“Terrible indeed. I was quite sure you would be



alarmed. I wanted to reassure you, but the door of your room was bolted—as usual,” he added sadly, lowering his voice.

She did not seem to hear, and continued the conversation with Anne, which he had interrupted, as she dipped a roll into her coffee.

“Are you quite sure of that, Anne?”

“Unless Birk lied,” answered Anne, in her rough tone. “The marriage will not take place for three months, however, on account of her deep mourning.”

“Three months! Oh! in that case, we will save her.”

And turning to Autheman, who was evidently annoyed by the unexpected presence of a third party, she said:

“I beg your pardon, my friend, but it concerns the safety of a soul. Eline Ebsen, don’t you remember my speaking to you of her?”

He cared little about Eline Ebsen.

“Jeanne!” he said in a whisper, with entreating eyes; but he saw that she was determined not to hear him, and suddenly added: “Good-by, I am going.”

With a gesture of her slender hand she pulled him up short, as by a bit.

“Wait, I have a commission to give you. Is Watson ready?” she asked, turning to Anne de Beuil.

“She is still sulky, but she will do it.”

Then she wrote on a sheet of letter paper, under a printed head of the name of the society. When she had finished, she read her note aloud:

“MY DEAR CHILD.—It is on next Wednesday that

Mistress Watson makes public profession of her faith in the gospel. We shall have on that occasion a most important meeting in the Hall B., 59 *Avenue des Ternes*. I rely on seeing you. Yours in Christ."

She signed her name and gave the letter to her husband, begging him to send it as soon as he reached Paris. She then gave him several commissions, proofs for the printer, an order for three hundred Bibles and as many more copies of "Daily Bread." She wanted a tuner to be sent to the harmonium in Hall B.

"Is there anything else?" he asked.

"No, nothing more."

On the threshold he turned with a faint hope that the interview he so ardently desired might yet be obtained, but he dared not speak, and finally rushed away, banging the doors furiously after him.

"What is the matter with him?" asked Anne de Beuil.

Jeanne shrugged her shoulders.

"The same thing of course." She added presently:

"Please tell Jega to put another bolt on the door of my room; the one there is loose."

"The storm of last night I suppose," said Anne de Beuil. "The whole house was jarred by it."

And the two women looked at each other, their faces calm and cold.

## CHAPTER IX.

## WATSON'S PROFESSION.

MADAME EBSEN and her daughter left the omnibus at the entrance of the *Avenue des Ternes* and turned into a court, which was dimly lighted by a lamp behind a red glass, on which were the words "Evangelical Meeting." At the entrance in front of a double door of green cloth sat a man who distributed little books and tracts and hymns, also a programme of the meeting of the evening, which had begun before the ladies ascended the steps.

The hall was large and lofty. It had been a manufactory, and although the walls had been white-washed, stains were still evident, left by the forge and the workmen.

Some forty benches were in one corner; of these not half were occupied by a few well dressed old ladies, some clerks from the Autheman Bank, a few strangers attracted by curiosity, and some loungers who thought it more economical to sleep on the benches here than in a café. There were a few blouses scattered about, and a considerable number of street sweepers—a class in which there are more Lutherans than in any other in Paris. Five or six soldiers with close cut hair and scarlet ears, a few beggars with vinous brutish faces, and among them one poor creature with children hanging to her skirts and eating a crust of bread.

Upon the platform where stood Anne de Beuil's tall form marking the time of a hymn with a black rod, Madame Autheman sat erect in a large arm-chair in front of a double row of evangelical pelerines, and of black alpaca blouses from the schools of Port-Sauveur, all holding papers in their hands on which was printed the hymns of the evening; these papers making white spots against all this black.

Eline seated herself on one of the benches with her mother and mechanically opened the programme, which was printed in the most costly style.

#### REUNION OF THE EVANGELICAL LADIES.

HALL B.—59 *Avenue des Ternes.*

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- 1st. Cantic: "The precious blood of Jesus whitens me like snow."
- 2d. Lecture: *Indolence of the soul*, by Madame J. Autheman.
- 3d. Profession of young NICOLAS from the schools of Saint Sauveur.
- 4th. Profession of WATSON of Cardiff: *A night in tears.*
- 5th. Cantic: "Sinners, turn your steps toward Canaan."

She had just deciphered this jargon when Madame Autheman sent to request that her mother and herself should take seats on the front bench. This request flattered the vanity of Madame Ebsen, who was very

proud to find herself among the well-dressed old ladies, whose equipages she had seen before the door by the side of Madame Autheman's and the omnibus from Port-Sauveur. This poor woman had a great weakness for titles and wealth, and she settled herself on this bench with the amiable air of a school mistress at a distribution of prizes.

Eline sat next her mother, greatly annoyed at having been made so conspicuous and troubled at being so directly under the eyes of the President.

The music ended suddenly.

Then there was the usual little stir, and coughs among the audience as they settled themselves comfortably to hear, and Madame Autheman arose from her chair and coming forward, with her black hair shining under a well made hat—for Saint Paul forbids women to pray or prophecy with uncovered heads—began to speak of the decay of faith and of the all-prevailing indolence of the soul. There were no more Christians among the men and women of modern times. There was no more struggling, no more suffering, no more dying for Christ Jesus. A daily routine of meaningless prayers, and a few petty sacrifices which did not interfere with the selfish affections of the heart, were believed to be enough.

Eline was again thrilled by this voice which had once before moved her. It was cold, but it was as penetrating as sharp icicles.

"She is speaking to me," said Eline to herself, and she was vexed that she had come, knowing how strong an influence this woman exercised over her.

"No," continued the speaker, "this is not enough! Jesus will have none of this lukewarm devotion, this superficial Christianity. What he expects is a complete renunciation of the splendors, the comforts and the ties of the world."

From without came the incessant roll of carriages mingled with omnibus bells, railway whistles, and the shrieks of an Auvergnat bagpipe. But the noise of Babel and its faubourgs did not reach the ears of the *Évangéliste* and troubled her no more than did the noise made by the little children at the end of the hall as they nibbled their bread, and the snores of some of the indolent souls of which she complained.

Erect and calm, pressing her pelerine close to her form with one hand, she held in the other a small hymn book, as she continued to preach the doctrine that all earthly ties should be broken, all worldly goods abandoned, and ended by a quotation from the Gospel:

"Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or brethren, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold."

The organ and the voices took up this theme and it was refreshing to hear them after this long discourse.

One of the soldiers rose and swaggered out. He was bored, and the hall was hot.

"They ought to open a window," said stout Madame Ebsen, in a low voice.

Eline thought she was answering her mother when she replied quickly, almost irritably:

"Yes, yes, it is in the Bible."

Suddenly a childish voice was heard speaking with the intonation of a street vender.

It was young Nicolas from the schools of Saint-Sauveur.

He was fifteen, and hollow cheeked, with smooth, glossy hair. He rocked to and fro in his long blouse, jerking out his words.

"Glory to God! I am washed in the blood of Christ. I served the devil, my soul was dark with iniquity. No, I should not dare to tell you the enormity of my faults."

He stopped to draw a long breath, and it seemed as if he meant to give the details of his sins. As he had come to Port Sauveur from a term at Petit-Roquette, the audience would not have been greatly edified. Fortunately he omitted them.

"Now all is glory and light within my soul, Jesus has taken me from out the fires of perdition; he will do the same for you if you will call upon him for aid. Sinners! You who are now listening to me, do not resist Him longer."

He addressed the old ladies on the front seat with a broad smile and with a little wink, as if he were talking to his old personal friends. He implored them to abandon their vicious associates and abandon themselves to Jesus, who would wash them in his precious blood, which would cleanse them of their crimes.

Then with a little roll of his shoulders, his head stuck out like a turtle's, he departed and gave place to Watson, from Cardiff. When she appeared a thrill of

excitement ran through the hall, as at the entrance of an actress. This Watson was the great attraction of the evening, and in the President's circle, "her profession," had been long anticipated.

Eline recognized under the broad brim of an English hat tied with wide ribbons, the swollen, tearful face and bloodshot eyes of the apparition by which she had been so painfully struck the day she first went to Madame Autheman's.

That morning she had probably been made to rehearse her "profession," and Lina could have told how much it had cost her.

"She is still sulky, but she will do it!"

Anne de Beuil had said this, but now she changed her mind, for Watson, before all these people, under all this light, with these curious eyes fixed upon her ugliness and her despair, lost her voice entirely.

Her poor thin breast heaved convulsively, her white hands with large prominent veins fluttered to her throat, apparently seeking to tear away some material obstacle that stifled her and prevented her from speaking.

"Watson!" said a quick, imperative voice. The woman moved her head a little, to signify that she would speak in a moment. And when the words came, they were uttered with so much effort that one heard a strange noise in her throat like the running down of a clock.

"One night in tears!" she began, but in so low a tone that no one could hear her.

"Louder! Louder!" said the same peremptory voice that had previously issued the order.



Then she caught her breath and bolted recklessly on with the most appalling English accent: "I had suffered greatly, and I wish to tell you how patiently Jesus bore with me."

At the theatre there would have been loud laughter at this accent, but here people looked at each other in astonishment.

"What is she saying?" they asked.

Madame Autheman and Anne de Beuil were whispering together. Then the President said, in a clear voice, "Eline Ebsen," at the same time beckoning the girl to her side.

Eline hesitated and looked at her mother.

"Go," said Madame Ebsen.

The daughter obeyed as if she were in a dream, and finally understood that she was expected to translate what Watson would now say in her own tongue. And Eline was a person who could do nothing at her piano if there were even two strangers in the room.

"She can not do it. She will never have the courage!" thought the mother.

She did have the courage, nevertheless, and began to translate what the woman was saying, while Madame Ebsen, animated by a puerile maternal vanity, looked proudly about her to judge of the effect produced.

Ah! miserable mother, it is on her child that she should look, on those cheeks now blazing with fever—on those eyes which at first veiled by their long, thick lashes, now opened wide and looked fixedly into the distance. Had Madame Ebsen studied her daughter

at this time, she might have understood that she was on the brink of a nervous attack, such as sometimes sends to their beds a long row of sick women, and that this half-demented creature, haggard and withered, standing by Eline's side and breathing upon her, was infecting her with her contagious madness.

Sinister and terrible was this "profession" of Watson's.

One day one of her children had been drowned under her eyes, almost within reach of her arms, and this death had thrown her into a state of terrible despair, a torpor of grief from which no one could arouse her.

Then a woman appeared to her, and this woman said :

"Watson! Rise up and weep no more. That which has come to you is a warning from God the Father; it is a punishment for being absorbed in terrestrial affection, for it is written 'Love not.' And if this first warning does not suffice, the Father will send a second; He will take your husband, your two remaining children, and He will strike until you understand and cease to rebel."

Watson asked, "What ought I to do?"

"Renounce the world and work for the Divine Master. Thousands of souls are enslaved by ignorance and the Devil. Go deliver them, bring them the glorious tidings of the Gospel. The life of those you love will be given to you in that case."

"I am going," said Watson, and profiting by the absence of her husband, who was keeper of the light-

house at Cardiff, she left the house one night when the children were asleep.

Oh! that night of her departure, that last watch by the side of those two little beds, the desperate clinging to those little hands and arms outstretched in all the graceful abandonment of sleep.

What a farewell that was! What tears she shed that night; and as she spoke, they again poured down her hollow cheeks like devouring lava. But with the aid of God, Watson triumphed over the Spirit of Evil.

And now she was at peace with Jesus. Happy! oh! so happy! Her heart was filled with joy. Watson of Cardiff is saved! Glory to God most High! Saved by the glory of God in Jesus Christ. She was ready to obey the orders of her superiors and go forth when they gave the word, to sing and to prophecy. She would go where they sent her, were it to the top of the highest mountain.

It was terrible—the contrast of this living despair with these worn, convulsed features, with this mystic Hosannah, “Glory! glory unto the Lord!” It somehow reminded one of a poor, wounded bird, with fluttering, bleeding wings, singing its death song.

When she had finished speaking, she still stood in the same place as if magnetized, her pale lips moved in voiceless prayer.

“Take her away,” said Madame Autheman, while the organ and the choir broke out in a triumphant peal:

“Sinners! Fly from madness;  
Turn your steps toward Caraan.”

Every one seemed disposed to obey this warning, and was eager to escape this stifling, perilous atmosphere.

On going out into the open air, the people drew a long breath of relief, and seemed astonished to see the crowd about the tramways, and the omnibuses and carriages crowding the avenues, rolling toward the park this beautiful Sunday evening, under the electric lights on the *Arc de Triomphe*, which blinded the horses and showed as plainly as if it were day, the signs over the shops and the theatre bills on the corners.

There was much said of Eline's success, and the President was congratulated on having secured such efficient aid.

Madame Ebsen tried to talk to Eline as they went home, in spite of the rattle of the omnibus, but the young girl did not speak ten words.

"Upon my word, Linette, it was very clever in you to translate like that. Lorie would have been proud enough could he have seen and heard you. But how warm it was. That poor Watson, too! But it was an awful thing to leave her husband and her children as she did. Can you believe it possible, dear child, that God commands such things?"

Her tone implied, although she did not put the idea into words, all the absurdity and cruelty of what she had seen. She spoke of it as a strange ceremony. She did not say as she would have done, but for the peculiar expression on her daughter's face, that "it was stupid and wicked." She did not feel at ease with

Eline for some reason. She moved a little nearer to her child, whose hand she took: it was cold, heavy and unresponsive.

"What is the matter with you, dear? You are chilled. Let me put up that window."

"No, no, leave it," said Eline, in a low voice, for the first time in her life annoyed by the useless words and the demonstrative affection of her mother.

Then, too, she was distressed by the crowd in the omnibus. Leaning toward the window, she endeavored to isolate herself, and to live over again the emotion she had undergone in the hall.

But what was the matter with Paris, that night—that Paris where, by chance, she was born, and which she loved as her home and country? Every gully she passed was foul and ill smelling; drunken men reeled past; children were wailing with hunger; women lounged at their doors. Further on, the luxury and elegance she saw, the crowds in front of the busy *cafés*, these well dressed women and men, this throng under the bright lights, saddened her still more.

It was like a masked ball, where the music could not be heard—a hovering of moths in the sunshine around the tree of death. Oh! what a harvest of souls was there! What a joy it would be to glean these for her Saviour!

And this idea seemed to arouse her from her torpor, and warm her heart.

It was now raining. A sudden shower swept the Boulevard and filled every porch and recess with people, who ran for refuge like frightened ants.

Madame Ebsen slept, rocked by the motion of the omnibus, her good, broad face framed in her hat, with the strings tied under the chin. Eline looked at her, and thought of the selfish life they were living.

Had she any right to be so contemptuous toward others? What more or better had she done than these whom she condemned? How puerile had been the good she had attempted. Did not God exact more at her hands? Had she not already wearied Him by her indifference and indolence? He had already come to warn her, as He had warned Watson, by taking poor grandmother away without allowing her time to turn to Jesus. Suppose he should strike another blow. Her mother! If her mother should die suddenly! This was the agonizing thought that haunted her through the night watches.

The impression of this evening, instead of being effaced by the laborious days that followed, grew and deepened, haunting her through all the lessons she gave in the wealthy and friendly houses, where she taught English and German to children whose mothers had been Madame Ebsen's pupils.

Notwithstanding the warmth of the welcome she received, and the luxury and comforts so grateful to her delicate tastes, Eline became very weary of the table surrounded by blonde heads, rising above wide English collars, and Jerseys embroidered with red anchors. She tired of the endless questions and continual repetitions of these little people, and came to the conclusion, like Henriette Briss, that her profession was belittling to her intellect.

And the men! How coarse and foolish they were, while the women reminded her of nothing so much as the *étagères* in their own apartments, weighed down and crowded with every conceivable trifle.

The Baronne Gerspach was a kind-hearted creature, to be sure, but she had no sense and few ideas beyond her husband's stables—always wanting a name for one of his colts, or a new remedy, powder or pomade for that most unfortunate skin disease, the Autheman malady, which attacked her at short intervals now as when she was at boarding-school and only Deborah Becker.

When lessons were over Eline hurried away, offering some excuse to escape breakfast, preferring a cake and a glass of water taken in haste at the counter of a confectioner to the luxurious repast, where over rare meals and port wine the thick lipped Baron laughed coarsely and assailed her as to the arrangements for her approaching marriage.

She was better pleased at the house of the Comtesse d'Arlot, which seemed to be so affected by the vicinity of the Convent de Barnables, that the carpets and curtains were odorous of incense. Under all this there was a great domestic sorrow, a drama which Eline knew only too well, for young girls in her social position are early initiated into the sad realities of life.

After being married some years to a man to whom she was profoundly attached, the Comtesse received one day a marriage visit from a niece, an orphan, whom she had brought up, and on that occasion was made aware by ocular demonstration that this girl had been, nay, was still the lover of her husband.

Because of the great name she bore and which she was most reluctant to drag through the mire, and because of her daughter, whom she did not wish to grow up under a cloud and to become known as the daughter of a woman who was separated from her husband, Madame d'Arlot avoided a rupture and offered to the world the spectacle of a united household. The intercourse between the husband and wife was confined to such courtesies as might have been exchanged between foes who were compelled to live side by side.

But she never forgot and never forgave. She threw herself into passionate observances of her religion, lost her health, and abandoned to the care of governesses the child who already devoured many things, and whose youthful eyes while she sat at table wandered from the too polite father to the silent mother with restless curiosity.

How many times had Madame Ebsen and Eline said to each other that the poor Comtesse would be wiser if she gave less of her time to churches and more to her child and her home; her duties as a mother and a woman would be more consoling and less sterile than her perpetual kneeling and prayers.

Now, however, Eline understood her, and no longer reproached her for her exaggerated devotion, but for the fact that this devotion had been so unfruitful. How different from Jeanne Autheman's energetic labors and Watson's renunciation.

"Where are you going, Lina? I will take you," said Madame d'Arlot after the lessons, and in her easy, well-hung carriage she abandoned herself to one of those



discouraged confidences with which women excite and sadden themselves and each other. She talked to this child whose mind was already disturbed, of her disgust and contempt for life, and of her desire to tear herself from all earthly joys and seek only those that will endure into Eternity.

She ordered her carriage to stop and entered a church. Eline made no objection, as Protestant temples remain closed during the week, and all places of prayer retain that atmosphere of mysticism which pleases religious natures. In the deserted church of Sainte-Clotilde she was more able to collect her thoughts and examine herself in the presence of Almighty God, than on Sundays during the cold and bare worship in the Rue Chanchat.

This Scandinavian Temple was one of the surprises of Paris, standing as it did in the *Quartier Montmartre*, two steps from the *Hotel-des-Vantes*.

On leaving the *Boulevard des Italiens*, nothing is more startling than to find oneself in the cold white light falling from an arched roof of which half is glass, and in the presence of a pastor who in a long black robe is preaching in a guttural dialect, which echoes and reëchoes from every corner of the building. Massive wooden benches are crowded with white-throated, blonde-haired women and square-shouldered, robust looking men, a whole colony of Danes, Norwegians and Swedes, with bright complexions, clear eyes, and beards like the gods of the North. They have their names registered on the book of Scandinavians at the *Café de la Régence*, and the bakers in the *Rue Saint-Honoré*

bake an especial kind of bread for them of honey and rye.

For a long time this Temple had brought to Eline great rest and repose. She enjoyed the hour she spent there every Sunday accompanying on the organ the Danish hymns which spoke to her of that unknown land. But now she asked herself why God should be pleased with rhapsodies mechanically sung by ordinary and indifferent voices.

This was the Christianity which so offended Madame Autheman, the faith without warmth of which she talked. In Japan they have praying machines, and one is quite as capable of moving hearts as the other. And these coquettish girls, leaning back in their seats, with their magnificent hair covering their shoulders, and occupying themselves with the toilettes of their neighbors, and the good mothers with their round, full faces, bow and invite each other to dinners and copious teas before they are well out of the Temple. The sexton looking like a respectable butler, extended his net at the end of a long stick to receive the offerings of the faithful. Pastor Birk was more than disagreeable to her. He held his head languidly on one side and hungrily estimated the dowries of the young girls.

Everywhere, and in every thing she recognized that indolence of the soul of which Madame Autheman had spoken; she saw that it was extending itself like mould over the front of the Temple, and like rust on the iron gates without.

And when, on returning home, she saw the old

Pastor Aussandon in his little garden, with his rake or his watering pot in his hand, even he, after all the proof he had given of his extraordinary zeal and firm, unyielding faith, even he, the Dean of the Church, she mentally accused of indolence. Yes, he, like herself and like most others was weak and indolent. Oh. this indolence of the soul! This indolence of the soul!

Of all these troubled thoughts, and of the gradual absorption of Eline's whole being by this one idea, no one about her had the smallest conception.

Madame Ebsen, charmed with the marriage which gratified her wishes, her daughter near her, and her son-in-law in the Government, was deeply absorbed in wedding preparations and the trousseau.

In vain did Eline say, "There is no haste, we have ample time," the mother paying little heed to the small interest shown by the *fiancée*, having herself made a common-sense marriage, examined her closets, unfolded sheets, selected from a box of relics the jewelry she would give her child—a brooch, ornamented with a portrait of the father, a string of pearls and filigree work such as is worn in the North. She measured her lace carefully, darned some and bleached a little.

"Look here, Linette. I have enough for the sleeves, and if we only had any to match for the neck! It would be lovely to have Brussels lace on your wedding dress."

Then she searched the shops to supply the deficiencies in linen and china, for the two households were to form one, and she knew there was not much in the *res de chaussée*.

She went down one day to look around with Sylvaire, and see what was wanting, and really it was like those new places of which Lorie spoke, much room and everything to be done. But with careful economy, Lina's lessons and translations, added to Lorie's salary would make them very comfortable. Then too, it was quite possible, that the former Sub-Préfect might yet be restored to favor.

Chemineau had said something of the kind to the Baronne. And Madame Ebsen indulged in dreams of a Sub-Préfecture of the first class, perhaps of the second, with a large garden on the sea as at Cherchell, horses, a carriage and a *salon* where she would help her daughter do the honors.

It was with Lorie, when he appeared in the evening, radiant with happiness, that the mother indulged in her dreams. Thankful for the excuse of lessons, Eline escaped all this talk which wearied her, and by which she felt herself half insulted, for she detested the thought that every one was talking about her marriage.

Marriage! And why? And during the monotonous recitation of the child, she dreamed of the future, feeling not the smallest interest in the progress of her pupil, nor the slightest pleasure in seeing her in the little chair which she had herself occupied by her grandmother's side when learning some new stitch.

No, she was only eager to go to her work once more; this new work of translation with which she had been intrusted by the President, occupied all her thoughts.

"Conversation of a Christian soul with God Almighty." By Madame \* \* \*

From her youth up, Jeanne Autheman had had familiar conversations with the Saviour. This book recounted them, and in an enthusiastic preface, J. B. Crouzat, director of the schools of Port-Sauveur, explained how these conversations with the Inaccessible, too shocking to the ideas of modern minds, were in fact perfectly simple and perfectly natural in her whom he called "the great mystic."

*"In this soul, absorbed as it is in God—"*

Eline had just written these words when her mother spoke:

"Linette, listen to this excellent idea of Monsieur Lorie's. A private stair-case to connect our two floors. He has made the plan."

Lorie went to her side, and showed her a superb plan washed in with India ink, during his leisure hours at the Bureau. With the end of his eye-glass he pointed out its merits.

"Charming," said Eline, without turning her head, and again buried herself in the dangerous mysticism where the Lyonnaise enveloped in soft mists like those of her native town, all the rancor of her youth. The clock of Saint-Jacques struck ten, and when little Fanny threw her arms about her with loving confidence and whispered "good night, dear mamma;" the sweet voice and tender pressure reconciled poor Eline for some minutes to the idea of her marriage.

One afternoon when Madame Ebsen was alone in the house, looking over accounts, there came to her a

visitor so unexpected and extraordinary, that the spectacles of the good lady slipped off her nose in her surprise.

Madame Autheman calling on her! She would have liked to throw down the walls of the ante-room and make a passage worthy of her fortune for the wife of the great banker. Fortunately the *salon* was, as usual, in perfect order. The blinds were drawn, the brasses dazzling, the chairs in their places, and on them the beautiful pieces of guipure. But she herself had on an old dress and an extremely shabby cap. "And Linette had not come in!"

"Never mind that," said Madame Autheman, whose calm smile was as great a contrast to the agitation of the Danish woman as was the luxurious toilette of silk and jet with the worn gown of the good woman.

"You want to know something, I suppose, about 'The Conversations?' Eline has not quite finished the work; the poor child, you know, has only her evenings."

And she went on to describe the laborious life of her daughter, the lessons she gave and her determination to have no assistance from Madame Ebsen.

"She often says to me," continued the mother, "'you have worked enough, mamma, you must rest, now.' She is but a child, Madame, after all, and—"

This "after all" was emphasized by two big tears—tears which prevented her from finishing her sentence.

The banker's wife looked slowly around the room.

"What does your daughter make by her lessons?" she asked, when the mother gave her an opportunity to speak.

"Oh! it varies, Madame." There were dull seasons, and Lina would never go with the families of her pupils to the springs or the seashore, or to their country places. She refused all invitations, as she would not leave her alone. She was looking over their little accounts that very afternoon. This year she had made four thousand francs.

"I will double that amount if she will devote herself to my schools."

This was said carelessly, with all the disdain of a millionaire.

Madame Ebsen was dazzled. Eight thousand francs. What a boon to the little household. But on reflection she did not see how it would be possible, for Eline would be compelled to give up the Baronne, on whom thy relied for Lorie's advancement. No, she was sure her daughter could not do that.

Madame Autheman then spoke of the great fatigue endured by Eline, and the danger incurred by such a pretty creature in going about Paris alone; while if she came to her, her *coupé* should be sent each morning.

Finally, the mother gave her consent to three mornings in the week.

The price of these lessons was fixed upon. Eline would breakfast at Port-Sauveur, and would come home before night. If, however, she should be detained, there was room for her at the Château.

Madame Ebsen uttered an indignant exclamation:

"No, indeed! I should not close my eyes all night if I did not know that my child was close to me—"

The other interrupted her by rising to depart.

"Do you love your child very dearly?" she said, in a grave tone.

"Very dearly!" answered the mother, disturbed by the solemnity of this grave question. "I have but my child in the world. We have never been separated and we never shall be."

"I thought she was soon to be married?"

"Yes, but we shall still be together. This was one of the conditions."

The two ladies were now at the head of the stairs.

"I am told that this Monsieur Lorie is not of the true Church?" said Madame Autheman, as she laid her hand on the railing. She did not seem to attach much importance to her question.

The mother, who was behind, was a little embarrassed for a reply, as she knew the lady and her opinions so well.

"No, Monsieur Lorie was not a member of the Church, to be sure; but the marriage would take place in the Temple. Of course, Eline would insist on that."

"I bid you good-bye, Madame," said the banker's wife, abruptly.

And when Madame Ebsen reached the door, all out of breath, and her cap fluttering in the wind, the *coupé* was driving off, and the lady was delighted that the whole street had seen the superb equipage standing at her door, much to their wonder and edification.



## CHAPTER X.

## AT THE TOP OF THE HILL.

ERIKSHALD, NEAR CHRISTIANIA.

“WELL, my dear Eline, I have followed your advice. I have tried to tear myself from this life of servitude where the pittance I gain seems so hardly won, and as my body is too weak to carry out the longings of my soul, I am condemned to vegetate far from my dear convent, with the flame of the sanctuary still burning within me. I have endeavored to nurse this flame in this Norwegian solitude which I have not seen for fifteen years.

“My rupture with the Princess! Oh! it was sudden and peculiar, as I might have expected, in a person so fantastic.

“As I passed through Buda Pesth, I encountered an old friend of Kossuth's, a patriot who had fallen into the sorest destitution, but as he was dignified and proud, even in his rags, I insisted on his dining with me at the Hôtel. Such a commotion as there was! All the ladies rose, refusing to eat with a mendicant, as if the Divine Master, who washed the feet of the poor, had not given an example of humility. The most indignant of them was the Princess, imbued, in spite of her pretensions to Liberal Christianity, with all the despotism of her race and her caste.

“After a violent quarrel she abandoned me without

money in this unknown town. I was obliged to appeal to my consul and from him I obtained a certificate of indigence. This confirmation of my vow of poverty would have left me, however, calm and serene, had I found here the asylum I desired.

“Ah! my friend——

“At first I was delighted to see once more this little seaport with its wooden houses, its tower overlooking the water, the church with no stained glass, but through the windows of which the deep blue sea sparkling and heaving; the Cemetery, all overgrown with weeds and the crosses and headstones broken down, could be seen. I thought what a beautiful place this was wherein to pray, if one was not constantly disturbed by the wickedness, the folly and the stupidity of the wretched creatures who haunted it.

“In no one of their faces, in none of their eyes was there a reflection of the sky above us. On the low wall of the Cemetery children were playing, the mothers sat near by, sharpening their murderous tongues as they sewed; and on Sunday evenings pretty young girls troubled the repose of the dead by profane songs and running in and out among the graves disturbing with their skirts the shadows of the crosses on the tombs, so strangely elongated by the moonlight.

“The welcome given me by my parents on my arrival was most tender.

“An appeal for the kindness formerly shown to the child who had now become a woman, touched the hearts of my father and mother. They seemed anxious to find something in my face and my ways which should

remind them of me when a child. But as the first excitement of my arrival died away and they resumed their usual habits, I saw they had not succeeded in their attempt, and that they had not found me again, while I on my side felt the distance increasing between us.

“Who has changed, they or I?”

“My father is a carpenter, obliged to work for his daily bread, notwithstanding his great age. He builds those houses with roofs of birch bark, which in winter bend under the snow; he makes the coffins of the parish also, but without a pious thought in the accomplishment of this sad duty. He works to the accompaniment of coarse songs and seeks forgetfulness in those distractions which make the misery of so many women. He always keeps a large yellow bottle under his work bench.

“My mother at first complained most bitterly and implored him not to drink; repulsed by brutal hands she bowed her head under insults and blows. She is no longer a wife and a mother, she is a slave without dignity.

“I am perfectly well aware that I grieve you by these confessions; you will regard my clairvoyance as impious. But as I have often said to you, Eline, I have long since risen above earthly things, and born a second time in God, I glorify myself that I have lost all human weakness.

“Listen to the *dénouement* of this domestic drama: Yesterday morning when I was in my little chamber, so like my convent cell, where I take refuge to pray

and meditate, to write and read, to kneel, Oh Jesus, before Thy cross, I heard my father—for the partitions are thin—ask my mother if I had come there to do nothing. He said I did not sew, nor knit, nor spin, nor did I assist her in her household cares. In conclusion he added, ‘Go tell her I say so, go tell her I say so.’

“A moment later my mother came in very softly. She moved about in an embarrassed sort of way, and then scolded me gently for not occupying myself. My sisters were married, the youngest was in service at Christiania, and all continued to send home some little help to their parents. My health was better and I ought to try to do something. I did not allow her to finish. I took her dear old face in both my hands; I remembered how tender her kisses were that she pressed on my blonde head, and my tears flowed fast. They are the last. And now, where am I to go, since my own people will have none of me?

“I am offered a situation at Saint Petersburg, abasement and servitude once more, but what does it matter? This unhappy attempt at home life has convinced me that the world is dead to me, my own family as well as the rest. My heart has closed, Eline, and nothing will ever more penetrate it.”

Eline received this letter from Henriette Briss one evening on her return from Port-Sauveur. She read it at the table which was already laid for dinner, the two places opposite each other, the bouquet that Madame Ebsen never omitted to place in her darling's

glass, was there as usual, for that meal was a daily recurring *fête*.

While Eline was waiting for her mother she sat there without removing her gloves or her hat, with her eyes riveted on the open letter, which spoke to her of death, renunciation and throwing oneself on God, in almost the same words that she had heard that day at Port-Sauveur. The two religions seemed to be alike, there was a difference only in the terms employed. What a fatality it was, that while this terrible combat was going on within herself, this discouraged voice should come from Henriette Briss, and add its support to the words of Jeanne Autheman.

A door opened. Her mother came in. She hid the letter in her pocket, knowing very well what Madame Ebsen would think of it.

Why have any argument, since they could not agree? Why admit that, without having, alas! "risen above earthly things," she had yet begun to see that there was a higher duty, one nearer to Heaven than that of family ties, and that these blasphemies of Henriette's no longer excited her indignation.

"You have come, Linette! I did not hear you. I was down stairs with Sylvanire. Have you been home long? But why don't you take off your hat?"

Eline seemed weary and utterly exhausted, as indeed she always was when she returned from Port-Sauveur; she removed her hat with such indifference and without even a glance at the mirror to see if her hair was in order, and at table she ate so little, and was so silent, that her mother began to feel very uneasy.

As was their habit in summer, they dined with the windows open on the garden, and they heard gay shouts of laughter, mingled with the song that the birds sang in farewell to the setting sun.

"Monsieur Aussandon has his grandchildren with him to-day. It must be a great fatigue for the poor man, Madame Aussandon is away on a journey; it is said that the Major is about to be married."

This was a pure invention of the old lady's, she made this statement in order to discover if there were the smallest sentiment lingering in Eline's heart for him.

The girl had been very cold of late toward Lorie and this idea had occurred to Madame Ebsen, but when Eline received the news with an "Ah! indeed?" the mother knew that there was no trouble in that direction.

Then Madame Ebsen tormented herself still further. She examined those lovely eyes; they had dark circles under them, the face had lost much of its roundness and freshness. There was certainly something wrong with the child.

She tried to question her about her days at Port-Sauveur, the school hours and those of recreation.

"The school is near the Château then, and you go only from one to the other, but that is not exercise enough, dear child. Five hours in a school room is trying, too trying. You went of course to see Maurice, at the lock?"

No, she had not been there. Then Madame Ebsen began to pity the poor little fellow who seemed to be left out of all the gayety and the marriage preparations.

"His father to be sure, thinks he can pursue his naval studies better there, but I really don't see what he is learning. Ah! my daughter, what good you will do. What a noble duty you have before you! A girl as good and serious as you will find her life a most congenial one."

Serious indeed! Nothing seemed to rouse her from this torpor of indifference or fatigue. She still sat at the table apparently too weary to move, with eyes gazing through the window, toward the same point in the golden sky.

"Let us go out a little while, dear. It is so lovely, and we can stop for Fanny as we go down."

Eline at first refused, then yielded to her mother with an, "oh! if you desire it. Let us go," she added, in a tone as if she had come to some great decision.

On these lovely summer evenings, all that side of the Luxembourg toward the old garden, resembles, with its ornamental baskets, its Japanese clematis, with its great purple flowers, its clusters of yuccas and cacti taken from the hot-houses, its statues of gleaming whiteness, a park kept with exquisite nicety for the pleasure of promenaders.

No dust and no noise from the Boulevard Saint Michel. The sparrows bathe here with impunity and steal the grass seed in company with the blackbirds, who have become very tame from being constantly fed by the children.

From all the neighboring streets there comes after dinner, a class of people very different from those who haunt the terraces, tradespeople, women who bring

their work or their books and sit with their backs to the avenue and their faces to the verdure, remaining thus until the last gleam of daylight has vanished. There are men who walk slowly up and down with their noses buried in a newspaper, while innumerable children scamper about, or smaller ones are learning to walk. They are brought to the garden at this late hour because the mother is busy all day.

Lorie having placed Madame Ebsen's chair before a row of iris blossoms, whose satiny texture, rich colors and aquatic perfume she loved, suggested to Eline that they should walk a little.

She accepted with feverish, eager haste, unlike other days, when she seemed anxious to avoid a *tete-a-tete*.

The poor man did not conceal his delight. He held himself erect and looked ten years younger as they walked down the path, and met other couples affianced like themselves.

Talking earnestly himself, he at first did not notice the almost sullen silence of the young girl. He accepted her coldness and reserve, and did not wonder that it increased as their marriage drew near. The day was not fixed, and yet in "the vacation" had been said. Then all Eline's scholars would be away, and there would be time to enjoy their freedom.

"In the vacation!" And it was now July! Ah! How glorious was this July evening, radiant with sunshine and promises. The lovers were fairly dazzled and blinded by the radiance, reflected as it was in the windows all along the Boulevard, which they saw between the branches of the trees, like an illuminated horizon.



"No, no, run on in front," said Eline, to little Fanny, who came back to her side.

The child obeyed, and ran down the path, frightening away the birds who were bold enough to peck at the gravel under the very feet of the promenaders, and now flew to the shrubs and then to the statues, alighting on the mane of a lion or on the uplifted finger of Diana. Violet shadows began to fall upon the earth, for night was coming on.

Eline said, suddenly :

"I have learned something that troubles me greatly. It seems that Maurice is preparing for his first Communion."

Maurice had, in fact, written to his father that he was studying his catechism at Petit-Port, and that the Curé was proud of having a Communicant this year. But why should this have troubled Eline?

"I ought to have been informed," she said severely, "and I should not have permitted it. Since I am to be the mother of these children, since you wish me to be their guide through life, I intend that their religion shall be the same as my own—the One Only True Faith—"

Was this Lina—the charming girl with the placid smile, who spoke in this harsh, determined tone? Was it she, who said, with a peremptory gesture, "Go away," to the child who came running toward them, and stopped short, struck by the change in their voices and in the expression of their faces?

The garden, also, seemed transformed; it had grown larger and darker, more indistinct, and the light on

the distant windows was dying away in the gray, creeping twilight.

Lorie suddenly felt weighed down by a sadness which left him almost without energy to contest this cold determination on the part of Eline. And yet she was "too reasonable not to understand," he said; "he had a certain scruple, his conscience was tender about it. The children were Catholics, like their mother, and out of respect for the dead—"

She interrupted him, coldly:

“It must be settled definitely. I would not begin a life under these conditions—with differences of faith and of worship, and certain discord in the future.”

“Eline, Eline, when people love each other, does not the heart rise above all things?”

**"There is nothing above religious belief."**

Night had come, the birds were silent in the trees. The few persons whom they met were hurrying on to the only gate now open, while the glow faded from the last window.

Lorie saw of Lina's face only two big eyes that he hardly recognized, so little did their stern fixity of expression resemble the sweetness usually seen in them.

"I shall say no more on this subject," she said, "you now know my conditions."

The mother, finding that they delayed, had come toward them with Fanny.

"We must go in," she said; "it is a pity, such a beautiful evening," and she continued to talk unanswered, as they walked side by side, so near to all appearance, but so far apart in reality.

"You are surely coming?" said Madame Ebsen, at the foot of the stairs.

Lorie entered his own apartment without daring to reply, and allowed the child to take her books and go up alone. She came back almost immediately, hardly able to speak, for the sobs that shook her from head to foot, and the grief that swelled her little heart.

"There are no more lessons; Made—Mademoiselle has sent me away; she will not be my mother."

Sylvanire took the little girl and carried her off.

"Hush, my darling—stop crying—I will never leave you, dear. Do you hear me, I will never leave you."

A looker-on would have said that in the fierce embrace and noisy kisses of the woman there was absolute joy—that she was happy in regaining possession of her child, and foresaw the rupture as she had divined the love.

A moment later, and Madame Ebsen arrived in great excitement.

"My poor Lorie—"

"Ah! she has told you, then? Can it be possible? I love her so truly that I would do anything she desires. But these children. I know what their mother thought and felt, and have no right— To think of her sending Fanny away like that! She is crying still, poor little soul. Listen to her."

"And Eline is crying too, up-stairs. She has locked herself into her room that I may not speak to her. Do you realize that? She has locked herself in to prevent me from following her, and never before in our lives have we had a secret from each other."

The apathetic but tender nature of this good woman was greatly moved and she said to herself over and over again, "What is the matter with her? What is the matter with her?"

Her daughter was entirely changed. She never touched the piano. She rarely read, and showed the most absolute indifference to everything that once pleased her. She rarely went out. "This very morning," continued Madame Ebsen, "I was obliged to insist on her taking a little fresh air; she is pale and eats nothing. I am inclined to believe it is the death of her grandmother."

"And Port-Sauveur, and Madame Autheman," said Lorie in a grave voice.

"Do you think that?"

"I tell you it is that woman. It is she who is robbing us of our Lina."

"Perhaps—you may be right. But they pay so well; they are so rich."

Lorie shook his head; the poor lover was unmoved by these considerations, and the mother concluded with these words: "Never mind, it will all come right."

Evidently she wished to make him await the coming of his misfortune with closed eyes.

All that night and the next day at the Bureau, Lorie adhered to his resolution not to yield.

His work was that of a subaltern and consisted of cutting from the newspapers the smallest article that contained the name of the Minister, and of affixing to the margin the name of the paper from which he cut the slip.

He performed his task as speedily as possible that he might write a note to Lina, which he found it difficult to elaborate amid the platitudes and laughs that came from the desks of his colleagues. While thus occupied he was summoned in the middle of the afternoon to his Director.

This was not Chemineau, however, he had been gone some time. Continuing his rapid rise, the former Préfect had received from the present Ministry the direction of the Department of Public Safety and was even talked of for the Préfecture of Police. The man who had taken his place, under whom Lorie was, proceeded to reprove his subordinate.

"Had any one ever seen the like? Was there ever such disrespect?"

"Disrespect, sir? Have I failed in respect?"

"Most certainly. You have permitted yourself to indulge in abbreviations. You have written '*Mon. Univ.*' for *Moniteur Universel*. Do you suppose the Ministry will understand? It has not understood, sir. It could not, it ought not to understand. Look out Monsieur Sixteenth of May!"

This was the last blow to a man who was already down. He sat as if stunned until evening, saying to himself that Lina lost to him, had carried away his star also.

It was worse still when on returning home he learned that Fanny had eaten nothing all day; that she insisted on remaining at the window to watch for Eline, who when she appeared did not deign to turn her head, although she heard the piteous appeal of the little girl's "Mamma! mamma!"

"And that, sir," said Sylvanire indignantly, "was very cruel. Our child may be made sick by it." Then with a little hesitation she said: "I was thinking sir, if you were willing, that we might go and spend a few days at the lock. Her brother and the fresh air will bring her round."

"You can do so if you choose," answered Lorie, who was greatly discouraged.

When dinner was over, he went to his room to try if a little of his favorite classification would not cheer him.

He shook the dust from his boxes and with difficulty recalled the complicated system of numbering that he had adopted, for it was long since he had opened the boxes. He had borrowed this system from Administrative machinery. In spite of all his efforts his thoughts could not fix themselves on what he was doing, but lingered about that pitiless Eline, whose light footsteps he heard over his head. He could follow her from the window to the piano, and from the piano to the grandmother's chair, and could see every corner of the little room, every ornament and piece of furniture.

The poor fellow had arrived at the point of making a compromise with his conscience. After all it was just enough, what Eline asked. It was certainly best that her husband, herself and the two children should hold the same faith and be united before the same God—"for," he said, to himself, "there seem to be many Gods, and this pious tie will consolidate the family." Besides, the State recognized this religion as well as the other, and to Lorie, as an employé of the government, this was an essential consideration.

As to the children themselves, surely their interests demanded that there should be a reconciliation between Lina and himself. Where could he find a mother more loving and tender for them? If he gave up this second marriage, they would be forever left with their nurse. Maurice, to be sure, had decided on his vocation and his future, but Fanny—

He pictured her to himself as she had come from Algeria, with red hands, a shawl like Sylvanire's, her cap and humble attitude, and with that indefinable odor of poverty that hangs about the children of the poor.

In an agony of despair he called upon the beloved wife and mother for aid.

"Tell me what to do, give me some signal," he cried.

But in vain did he invoke her memory, he could no longer see her, but in her place stood the fair and tempting image of Eline Ebsen. She had taken everything from him, even the memory of those early days of happiness. Ah! wicked Lina!

It was plain that his classification that night was to amount to little. Lorie went to the open window. Opposite to him, on the other side of the garden, at Aussandon's window, also open and lighted, he saw the head of the Dean as he sat at his desk.

He had never spoken to this old man, whom he occasionally met, and to whom he always bowed. The Dean carried his seventy-five years with unbent form, his beard and hair were snowy white and his face clever and benevolent. Madame Ebsen had told him much of the old man's history, and he knew the glorious work he had done. A Cévenol and a peasant,

without the smallest ambition, Aussandon, had he been alone, would never have left his first parish at Mondardier, his church or Temple, as it was called, built of the black stone of the country, his vineyard, his flowers, and his bees which he loved to watch in the little leisure which he allowed himself; bringing the same gentle spirit to the vestry-room and to his garden—finding a sermon under his spade, and sowing the good seed from his pulpit. On Sunday, when the labors of the day were over in the village, he preached a sermon on the mountain to the shepherds, the woodcutters and the cheese makers. Three wooden steps formed the pulpit from which he preached, far above the chestnut trees and pines, in that elevated region where nothing grows. His best sermons, grand and yet familiar in phraseology, were spoken there to these poor people with a pastoral horizon outspread before him, from which all civilized humanity seemed absent. The tinkle of the bells around the necks of the flocks scattered over the mountain slopes, was the sole reply to the eloquent words of the pastor. The images, the phraseology quaint and picturesque, the *patois* that flattered these primitive audiences, Aussandon never lost, and to them he owed the fame he subsequently won as a preacher in Paris.

When the sermon was over, he dined in a little hut from off a wooden platter, and then descended the mountain accompanied by a crowd of people singing hymns, and often amid one of those formidable mountain storms, when the thunder, lightning and hail encompassed him about, like Moses in the Bible.



He would have been happy if he could have remained in this quiet spot, but Madame Aussandon did not permit it.

This terrible little woman was the daughter of a preceptor in the neighborhood; she was intelligent and active, with quick, sharp eyes, a slightly protruding mouth and pointed teeth; she was good-hearted and good-natured, but she wanted her own way. It was she who led her husband, who spurred him on. Her ambition was restless and persistent for him and for their boys, who were as numerous as acorns on a sturdy oak.

She managed so well that he was called to Nîmes, then to Montauban, and finally to Paris, where she accompanied him in triumph.

His science and his eloquence were his own, but "Bonne," as he called his wife, when he tried to restrain her, Bonne was the one who made his fortune and his position. Economical for them both—for Aussandon in the village gave away everything, linen, clothing, and even the wood from the side of his fire, which he threw out of the window to the poor when his wife carried off the key of the wood-closet—she had managed to bring up her eight boys. No one ever saw a hole in their shoes nor in their pantaloons, which she mended, sewing patiently far into the night. She was never seen without a needle or some knitting in her hand, which she diligently used while she was talking or walking, and also in the trains and diligences, which she frequented after all her boys were scattered at different schools, where she had succeeded in obtaining free scholarships.

This marvellous activity, which was her nature, she exacted also from others, and she never left her husband in peace until her eight boys were settled, some in Paris, others elsewhere in France, and one or two in foreign lands. The Pastor Aussandon was greatly in demand for interments and marriage ceremonies, which were very fatiguing—for he had made for himself a place apart—a position between the Orthodox and the Liberals, a position far above parties and rivalries.

The poor great man had more glory and more to do than he cared for, and continually regretted the time and space which had been his at Mondardier, and he thought with longing of his sermons on the mountain. Finally he was appointed to the Faculty of Theology, and his wife then allowed him to go his own way and resume in their little house in the Rue du Val-de-Grace the calm and contemplative life he had led at Mondardier. He thoroughly enjoyed the ease won at the price of so many early privations, and was only miserable when his beloved tyrant left him in spite of her age, to go off on a journey to see one of her boys.

No distance or fatigue, nothing in short discouraged the little old lady.

Sometimes Paul, the major, would see her appear in the middle of his camp, and undismayed by battalions, infantry or artillery, she would make her way to his tent.

Sometimes the engineer at Commentry, standing at the entrance of one of the black galleries to watch the descent of the miner's basket, would exclaim:

“Holloa! there is mamma.”

Madame Aussandon was on this evening away on

her travels. But for that the old Dean would never have worked so late at the open window.

He was preparing his lecture for the next day and seeing him thus alone, Lorie was suddenly inspired with the idea of going to speak to him.

There was but the garden to cross. He knocked at the door and was received into the study, which was delightfully comfortable, filled with books, and with a large portrait of Madame Aussandon above the desk, watching with attentive eyes and with a faint smile the persistent labors of the good man.

Abruptly, and with little circumlocution, Lorie told what had brought him there. He wanted to be converted, himself and his children, to the Reformed Religion. He had been thinking of it a long time, and now he was eager that it should be accomplished. What should he do?

Aussandon smiled gently and calmed him with a gesture. As to the children, it was only necessary to send them to Sunday school. Lorie himself must study and examine his new belief, weigh and compare, since this religion of truth and light was commanded to all the faithful. The Dean would recommend him to another pastor, for he himself was old and worn out.

What could Lorie say, this weak and irresolute Lorie, to these simple and energetic words?

There was a long silence, and an uncomfortable feeling between the two men. Lorie turned away his eyes, a little disconcerted at his rash step. The Dean sitting at his desk looked down on the white page before him which seemed to excite him to thought.

"It is for Eline, is it not?" he asked after a long silence.

"Yes."

"And she exacts this of you?"

"Yes, or at least others do through her."

"I know, I know."

And he did know.

He had seen the carriage of Madame Autheman stop often before the door of his neighbors; he knew the woman, and of what she was capable. If "Bonne," had not forbidden him, he would long since have warned the mother.

And now, reading at a glance, the sad drama of which Lorie had given him a hint, he wanted to say:

"Yes, I know her, this Jeanne Autheman. She is a woman who respects no ties, and who is without pity and without heart. Everywhere she goes her path may be traced by tears, disunion and solitude. Warn the mother, for it is not you alone who are concerned in this matter. Tell her to take Lina away, far away, and at once. Bid her take her from all danger of this living death and place her out of reach of this devourer of souls, who is as cold and passionless as the ghoul of a cemetery. Perhaps there is still time."

Aussandon thought all this, but he dared not say it because of the little old woman who looked down upon him from the frame on the wall with the prudent expression of a peasant, and her firm jaw ready to seize him as soon as he had uttered the imprudent words.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE RETREAT.

PUNCTUAL and solemn like all the habits of the Château, breakfast at Port-Sauveur brought together, in the absence of the banker, all the members of the religious household around the table of Jeanne Autheman.

The seats were always the same. The President at one end of the long table, Anne de Beuil at her right, on her left J. B. Crouzat, the teacher with hollow cheeks, a short, stiff beard, flaming eyes, blue and protruding under a projecting brow.

He came from the province of Anne de Beuil, and had gone through his studies, being intended for the ministry, when one day he was taken by a friend to hear one of the Evangelist preachers.

He went away in that state of exaltation into which certain preachers throw their hearers; but with him the impression was more lasting, and five years previously he had left family and friends, and sacrificed his future for the modest position of first instructor, given him by Jeanne.

He passed for her lover in the eyes of many of the peasants, for these coarse peasants could explain in no other way, this fervor of the disciple hanging on the lips of the apostle. But the Evangelist had never had a lover, and the only passionate words that had ever

come from those close-shut, chiselled lips were frozen long since.

Opposite Crouzat sat the directress of the girls' school, Mademoiselle Hammer, a sad-looking woman, whose eyelids were always lowered. She never spoke, and when addressed, replied with a plaintive "yes."

There was a crushed look about this poor creature, from her narrow shoulders to her small nose in the centre of her white face, that seemed to have been flattened by the original fall; and the impression of Eve's fault was so deeply implanted in her, and depressed her so profoundly, that she was incapable of any outside propagandism, and was, therefore, entrusted with the class of little children.

The end of the table—the seat reserved for Pastor Birk, on Sundays—was occupied during the week by that pupil, either boy or girl, who received the highest marks for recitations of Holy Scripture.

At Port-Sauveur, the education is exclusively religious, and consists of committing to memory verses from the Bible, from which are drawn all the lessons—even the A, B, C's are taught in this way. So great is the faith of Jeanne Autheman in the Gospel, that she thinks it acts on the neophytes even when they are too young to understand, in the same way as the inscriptions from the Koran, which the Arabs bind on their foreheads when they are ill.

It is sad to see the noblest of books spelled out—drawled out, stammered over by these young peasant voices—stained and worn by the dust of their hands, and by the tears of their idleness.

Young Nicolas, the former pensioner of Petit-Roquette, is the perfect type of this mode of education; consequently, he is the one who almost invariably occupies the seat of honor opposite the President.

He knows the Scriptures by heart—the Gospels of Luke, John, Mark and Matthew, Deuteronomy, the Psalms, and Paul's Epistles—and is continually quoting from them without any especial aptness, and in an inarticulate, mumbling voice, which seems to come from a phonograph.

Everybody looks at him with wonder and approbation. It is God Himself speaking through the mouth of this youth!

And what a mouth! When one thinks of all its impious, foul utterances, three years ago, in the penitentiary, is it not miraculous, and the most overwhelming testimony in favor of Evangelical schools? And all the more, because there still remain on Nicolas some stains of the former state of sin—falsehood, gluttony and *prévarication*—and because he often presents the edifying spectacle of combats between good and evil in this still hardened conscience, and in his phrases, wherein the words of the Holy Gospel are strangely mixed with the *argot* of prisons.

It is amid these strange surroundings that Eline Ebsen takes her place, on those days that she breakfasts at the Château. Her position is known to every one, and also the impious marriage she is about to contract. It is known that the cure of her soul has begun, but that her heart is hard and resists all efforts.

All the sweetness and invincible patience of Madame Autheman is required to continue her efforts in the presence of such antagonism. Anne de Beuil would long since have scourged from the Temple this creature, destined to the lake of brimstone and fire, with the words:

“You wish to burn, do you? Well, burn then.”

This, too, was the opinion of J. B. Crouzat. Eline feels the hostility by which she is surrounded. No one speaks to her, no one deigns to notice her, except with looks of anger or contempt. Even under the silent, stolid face of the sacristan who waits on the table she bows her intimidated head, and realizes in the depths of her heart her inferiority to these saintly personages.

And yet in these lengthy breakfasts at Port-Sauveur, with their convent dishes, their stewed beef, watery vegetables and cooked prunes—in the intense quiet and solemnity of this long table, she finds something grave and sacred that affects her as if she, in all her unworthiness, had been permitted to be present at the Supper of Our Master.

She loves the conversation, of which she catches only a few low-voiced words—the mystical phraseology in which occurs emblematical words like *flock* and *vineyard*, or abstractions like *trial* and *expiation*, and the *wind of the desert*.

She was interested in a quantity of things which she did not in the least understand, and which she heard talked of as “the Work.” Then, too, there was the mysterious retreat, into which she had never pene-



trated. She listened with interest to the chronicles of the moral and religious condition of such and such families.

"I am greatly pleased with Gélinoth. Grace is working," said Anne de Beuil, whose eyes, like those of a policeman, mounted guard over all the village, and all about it for a distance of ten leagues.

Or "Baraquin is a backslider, he has left off going to the Temple."

After this came a vehement torrent of words against renegades and apostates wallowing like swine amid the filth of their sins. Eline knows well that these remarks are all intended for her, as well as this delicate comparison, although it is difficult to establish an analogy between this Biblical animal and the gentle profile flushed with shame, and a tiny red ear glowing through masses of blonde hair.

"Anne, Anne, we must never despair of any sinner;" and with a gesture Madame Autheman appeases the sectarian, imitating the infinite gentleness of Jesus, when he reproved Simon the Pharisee.

Then while eating and drinking with measured movements, she talked freely in that persuasive voice which was the admiration of J. B. Crouzat, and lulls poor Eline into a mystical trance, in which she wished to fade away and vanish like ephemera in the sunshine.

But why is this young girl, in appearance so amiable and docile, who is so deeply moved and weeps so bitterly when shown the enormity of her sins,—why is she so rebellious and unwilling to announce her positive decision? For more than a month she has been

coming to Port-Sauveur and the President is astonished at having as yet obtained nothing. Is Anne de Beuil right, after all? Will the evil one triumph over this soul precious to "the Work," in so many ways?

Madame Autheman is beginning to fear that this is the case, and when one morning on entering the dining room, punctually at eleven, she sees no Eline humble and expectant standing near her chair as usual, she says to herself: "It is done, she will come no more." But the door opens and the young girl appears, more animated than usual and more assured in manner, although her eyes were heavy with tears.

There had been a brief detention on the road, a delay of fifteen minutes at Choisy. She makes this brief explanation, and seats herself quietly, asking the Beadle for bread without the slightest indication of shame. She mingled in the conversation and used the words *flock and vineyard* like an adept, and was perfectly serene until she heard Anne de Beuil ask in her surly way:

"Who are those people at the lock? The woman came yesterday by the train. A big impudent creature who stares you in the face. She had a little girl with her, the sister of little Maurice I believe. More small fry for the *curé*!"

Eline turned very pale; Fanny, her child, so near! Through her downcast lids she sees the dainty, delicate head, the blonde braids tied with a soft ribbon.

Suddenly the coarse voice at her side, said:

"You mean the boy at the lock? I chased the rascal well this morning."

These unwary words came from the lips of young Nicolas, who seemed aghast at what he had said, and in his suffused and swollen face the struggle of the evil and good spirits was plainly visible. Nicolas swallowed the contents of his glass, and then with a sigh, attacked a verse from Ecclesiastes.

*"The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is mischievous madness."*

Hallelujah! Satan is once more overthrown. A satisfied sigh went around the table, and just as the noon train thunders past, every one rises and folds his napkin, glorifying God in a hymn of praise as he does so.

"Is this true? Ah! my dear child, let me embrace you for the good news."

It is the cold Jeanne Autheman who seizes Eline by the hand and draws her away.

"Come quick and tell me all about it."

At the door of the small *salon*, she stops short. "No, at the Retreat we shall be better."

To the Retreat! What an honor for Lina. On the sunny balcony, where the forms of the pilgrims cast black shadows, Anne de Beuil stopped her mistress:

"Baraquin is there," she said.

"Speak to him. I haven't time," then in a whisper, she added, "she is saved."

Madame Autheman went away, leaning on Eline's arm, while her acolyte turns to question the old sailor who has risen from the bench where he was waiting, his cap in one hand and with the other scratching his head, which was hard, round and damp as a stone on the edge of the water.

"Baraquin, why do you come no more to the meetings?"

"I am going to tell you—"

He followed with regretful eyes, the black skirts disappearing around the corner of the avenue, knowing by experience that he could much more easily impose on the *Évangéliste*, than on this stern old creature in her linen *Coiffe*.

"I'm sure that Madame Autheman's religion is as good as any other, and that no *curé* could say mass better than she. But then you know I am an old man and my children want me to go to their church, and I must say that on Sunday when I went to the Bon-Dieu, at Jervisy, and saw all the candles and the gilding, and the beautiful Holy Virgin, I felt stirred up inside!"

It was not the first time that old Baraquin had played this comedy to extract forty francs, and a new coat.

Anne de Beuil resisted, and nothing could have been more droll than to see them finessing, one peasant trying to outwit the other peasant, disputing as if at market for this old hardened soul which certainly was not worth the money.

But what a triumph for the *Curé*, if Baraquin returned to his old faith and the Church! Nevertheless, she allowed him to depart, and watched him hobble down the steps. When he was half way down Anne de Beuil called him:

"Baraquin!"

"What is it?"

She walked by his side toward the green *salon*. As they passed young Nicolas, the silent witness of this scene, the old peasant winked at him, and the lad with half-closed eyes muttered an appropriate text.

*"I have taken away thy sins, and have clothed thee in new garments."*

When Nicolas was alone he threw aside his hypocritical mask, and lounged away with his hands in his pockets—his thoroughly degraded face and form seen for a moment against the dark background of trees and shrubbery.

Eline had been coming to Port-Sauveur for a month, but she knew nothing of the estate except the gardens, and the avenue which made a long, luminous line toward the white Temple and the schools.

It was in this avenue that Madame Autheman always walked while she catechized her and showed her the consequences of this impious marriage.

"God will strike you through your mother, through your children," she said. "Your fall will be like that of Job, stained by tears."

The poor child struggled, spoke of the promise she had given, of the motherless children, and daily returned home miserably unhappy and undecided, to repeat the same dismal walk the next day, or the day after, under the green trees where all was fresh and odorous, and where the sun fell in luminous patches on the black dresses which seemed to absorb its brilliancy. The *Évangéliste* talked of death and of expiation, and Lina felt that it was impossible to

take any stand against her, and that all earthly happiness was slipping from her.

This day Madame Autheman passed the point at which she was in the habit of turning, and went directly across the park toward the wide and carefully kept paths, where the stateliness of the French style of gardening added to the apparent size of the grounds. Ivies were curiously trained into the forms of porches and peristyles, with box cut into round balls, and vases about which ivy and acanthus were carefully twined.

Jeanne did not speak; she leaned in silence on the arm of the neophyte, who was deeply impressed by the deep silence, broken only by the rustle of their skirts or the crackling of the twigs which Jeanne pushed aside with her instinct of regularity.

A gate stopped them, which the Evangéliste opened; it grated harshly on its hinges, and at once the aspect of the place changed and became wild and free. The paths were overgrown with grass and brambles, wild roses blossomed, and the hedges were gay with buds, while trees overgrown with moss looked like a primeval forest.

In the centre of an opening was a chalet built of pine—a real Swiss chalet—with its latticed windows and its veranda under the long sloping roof consolidated by great stones to protect it from the storms of the mountain, and this was the Retreat!

Early in her married life Jeanne had caused to be built in the second park, far away from the Refineries and the Château, this pious refuge—a souvenir of Grindelwald, and of her first interviews with the Inaccessible.

When "the Work" was arranged, she gave shelter here to "the Workers," the elect, who were to sow the seeds of the Gospel and from whom she exacted a sojourn of some months under her eyes.

On the lower floor was the *Room of Prayer*, as dreary as one of those mission vessels which carry the Gospel to the English whalers in the North Sea, and it was in this room that they practiced preaching. Madame Autheman or J. B. Crouzat here also gave them lessons in theology or in vocal music. The rest of the time was passed in meditation in the solitude of their rooms until such time as Jeanne, believing them worthy, pressed a kiss upon their brows and sent them away with the Biblical words: .

"Go, and work in my vineyard."

And they went, poor creatures, into some great manufacturing centre, Lyons, Lille, Roubaix, wherever sin had made its ravages, where souls are blacker than the skins of African savages, as black as the narrow lanes, the dusty soil mixed with coal dust and the tools of their trade.

They settled themselves in the crowded *faubourg* and commenced their work—teaching children during the day, and in the evening preaching the good tidings. But the vineyard was hard and rocky, and the vintage far from abundant. Everywhere they spoke in almost empty rooms, where they were exposed to the jests of the workmen, coarse almost to insults, and had much to bear from which the influence of the Authemans at this distance from Paris could not always save them. They were not discouraged, nevertheless; they planted

the Divine Word in good and evil soil with unabated confidence, for is it not written that in the most stubborn soil a little faith not larger than a mustard seed can take root and grow?

Convinced, they must have been, to be willing to accept the pittance of one hundred francs monthly and this solitary, deserted life to which they were condemned by Madame Autheman, who broke every family tie with the same indifferent gesture that she broke off the intrusive twigs in her shrubbery.

Their life was that of the cloister without its locks and bars, to be sure, but with its same deprivations, its sudden departures at the word of command, the continual change of abode, and the yearly return to the Retreat, there to be again inspired by the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes it came to pass that "the Worker" encountered some good man and left her preaching to become his wife.

One and only one, ran away with the money intended to pay her expenses and to purchase souls. But in general they were attached to their duties and expended all their vitality in achieving one aim. They were mystical to ecstasy, even to that madness which one finds so often among the women of the Reformed Religion, and which so often extends as an epidemic among the people as it did in Sweden thirty years ago, when all public places and the country roads were full of visionaries and prophetesses.

Among "the Workers" of Madame Autheman, pretty creatures like Eline Ebsen were rare. They



were almost all old, out of health or deformed ; women who saw no prospect of marriage, and who were glad to lay at the feet of God that which man had disdained.

— This was in short the sole utility of this “Work,” which was so unsuited to the French character, that it would have been almost laughable but for the heart break and tears that it so often occasioned. I assure you that the desolate man alone in his light-house did not laugh when he said to himself over and over again : “Where is she ? What will become of the children ?”

Nor did the hostess of the *Affameur* laugh. She sobbed over her furnaces amid the gayeties of her guests when she thought of her dead daughter and of her husband shut up in a mad house.

Poor little Damour, so pretty and so good ! Madame Autheman had taken her from school, then shut her up in the Retreat, with the consent of the mother, who had little idea of what was intended. The incessant sermons, the music and the constant talk about death, soon crushed under a weight of intolerable sadness this youthful growing creature, who had hitherto been accustomed to life in the open air.

The child said, “I am tired, I want to go home.”

Anne de Beuil scolded and terrified her and prevented her from going out.

And suddenly the neophyte fell into a state of singular apathy and prostration, interrupted by an occasional crisis of nervous excitement, when she saw visions that revealed to her the mysteries of Heaven and Hell, the tortures of the damned, the joy of the elect. She passed from the ecstasies of delight into

agonies of terror. The young peasant girl preached and prophesied and raised her slender form from her narrow bed with shrieks and cries that rang through the park.

"I heard her screams outside," said the miserable mother, who was kept away under the pretext that all emotion was dangerous to the sick girl.

She was permitted to enter only when her daughter was unconscious. She was dying with set teeth, convulsive movements and with an extraordinary dilation of the pupils of her eyes, which suddenly enlightened the physician as to the cause of this strange death.

She had gathered the berries of the belladonna in the park and had eaten them, mistaking them for cherries.

"As if my child did not know these berries to be poisonous!" cried the mother angrily. And in spite of the report of the Procureur de Corbeil, which was a masterpiece of judiciary irony, and of graceful *persiflage*, she remained convinced that her child had been given strange drugs in order that she should be made to prophesy, and that these drugs had killed her.

This too was the general opinion throughout the district, and it gave a bad name to this mysterious chalet which was seen through the leafless trees in winter from a long distance. But on the day of which we write, in the silence and splendor of this summer afternoon, the Retreat had nothing sinister about it, but it had a mystical effect on Eline which could be defined in three words, gentleness, repose and light.

A low murmur of women's voices reciting prayers,

## CHAPTER XII.

## A SHOCK.

"THE train ! I am here in time," said Madame Ebsen, all out of breath, as burdened with umbrellas and a pair of overshoes done up in a newspaper, she reached the station, just as the six o'clock train puffed in.

She was comfortably in the house laying the table for dinner, when a storm, the last storm of the summer, suddenly burst forth. She thought of her child, who had gone to Port-Sauveur that morning wearing thin dress and shoes, as did all Parisians that day. Madame Ebsen at once started forth and threw herself into an omnibus that would take her to the Orleans Station.

And now she stood leaning on the railing, seeking to distinguish Eline's hat or light hair amid this crowd of people, carrying baskets and bouquets, with their garments drenched by the shower, all hurrying toward the carriages and omnibuses with cries of "Take the dog ! carry the child !"

But all in vain did she stand on the points of her toes to look over the shoulder of a custom house officer into each car. All now were empty, and Eline's black hat was still invisible.

At first the mother was not alarmed ; she attributed the delay to this unexpected deluge. Of course, Eline would arrive by the next train, which after all was

but a trifle later. First came the Express which did not stop at Albion.

She accepted the situation gaily enough, and began to walk up and down the deserted station, where the gas that had just been lighted, flickered in the damp wind, and was reflected on the paving stones without.

In a few moments she heard the whistle of the locomotive. The whole station shook with the approach of the train, which thundered past, and then all was still save the echo of her own footsteps, the drip of the interminable rain, and the rustle of a newspaper held in some invisible hand.

Madame Ebsen began to grow very weary of waiting in this way with an empty stomach and cold feet. To console herself she thought that before long they would be comfortable in their little attic nest, where a good beer soup was hot and ready for them. Eight o'clock. More thunder and more whistles from the locomotive. The gates were thrown open, but no Eline appeared. It was clear that she had been kept at the Château. The mother was sure that a telegram had been sent, which she would find on her return to the house. It was all right, of course, though Madame Autheman knew how much they were to each other, this mother and daughter, and Eline ought not to have yielded to her entreaties.

The poor woman scolded to herself all the way home in the rain, as she spattered through the pools of water in the long avenues which lead from the station, past lines of five-storied houses, built of white plaster with black holes for windows.

"You have a despatch for me, mother Blot?"

"No, Madame; there is a newspaper. But how happens it that you are alone?"

She had not strength to reply,—this poor mother, for a thousand fears now besieged her.

Eline was ill, probably. But she should have been informed if the Château were inhabited by human beings. Should she go at once to the Château at night and in such weather? It would be better to wait until morning.

It was a sad, dreary night, and reminded her of their return after the burial of the grandmother; there was the sensation of emptiness and desolation, with the difference that then, she had Eline to help her bear it, and now, Madame Ebsen was alone,—alone with her anxieties and forebodings. There was no light in the windows of the Lories.

Since he had sent Sylvanire and the children to the lock, the poor man did not come in until very late, for he wished to avoid a place which had become intensely painful to him, ever since Eline had ceased to reply to his letters—even to the one in which he signified his submission, and accepted the conditions upon which she had insisted for him and his.

Suddenly Madame Ebsen, who had not seen Lorie for two months, felt in her distress a pang of remorse at having so readily abandoned this good man at the capricious bidding of Eline. It is only in suffering that one learns to understand all the unavowed pangs of another.

She did not even think of lying down on her bed,

but kept her lamp lighted and counted the hours, listening to every sound and to the approach of the infrequent carriages, with the nervous hopes and superstitious fears born of waiting and expectation.

"The third one that passes will stop at this door," she said, with her hand on her heart; but this carriage drove on as did others, until she heard the rattling wheels of the milk carts at dawn.

Then with the usual reaction after a sleepless night, she threw herself back in her chair and fell into a profound slumber, from which she was aroused by a violent ring of the bell and by the energetic shouts of Mother Blot.

"Madame Ebsen, Madame Ebsen! It has come, and I am quite sure that it is from your young lady."

In the pale light that came through the uncurtained windows of the little *salon*, Madame Ebsen saw the white envelope pushed under the door. Eline had written; she was not ill then. What was the matter?

This was the letter:

"MY DEAR MOTHER:—In the fear of afflicting you, I have shrunk from telling you until now of the resolution to which I in my heart arrived long since. But the hour has come. God calls me, and I go to Him. I shall be far away when this letter reaches you. How long our separation will last, how long my time of probation will be, I cannot tell; but I shall be certain to keep you informed of my welfare, and also to furnish you with an opportunity of sending letters to me. Be sure that I shall not forget you, and that I

shall pray to the Lord to bless you and to give you that peace which passeth all understanding.

“Your devoted daughter,

“ELINE EBSSEN.”

At first the mother did not understand, and she read the letter again, phrase by phrase aloud, even to the signature Eline. Was it Eline who had written that letter—her child, her little Lina? Impossible! And yet the writing, though somewhat unsteady, was like that of her daughter. Yes, those mad women had held her hand and dictated these monstrous phrases, in which Lina had no part or share.

Whence came this letter? It was postmarked Petit-Port. Eline, therefore, was still there, and her mother had only to go to her to change this horrible resolution. It was a base and cruel thing to try and steal her child, her adored Linette. It was evidently the business, the trade of this Madame Autheman to break the hearts of mothers. But she would go and see her.

Madame Ebsen talked loudly, alone as she was, while she hastened to and fro making her little preparations, bathing her face after the tears of the night, and smoothing her hair.

When, at last, she had purchased her ticket and was seated in the train, she became somewhat calmer, and endeavored to retrace the successive and treacherous steps by which her child had been approached, beginning with the first visit from Anne de Beuil, whose various questions she recalled as to the people she knew in Paris—probably to ascertain if they could

manœuvre with impunity—up to that prayer meeting, when her daughter was on the platform by the side of that mad woman.

She remembered what Madame Autheman had said, when she came to ask that Eline might go to her school:

“You are very fond of your daughter, Madame?”

And she heard again the cold, perfidious voice, and saw the rigid lines of that pretty mouth.

But how was it that she did not understand all this sooner? How great had been her blindness, how terrible her weakness! For after all, she had been the cause of the whole trouble.

These translations, these religious wanderings with which the girl had been slowly intoxicated, were at first obnoxious to her. She had not cared to have anything more to do with them than with the prayer-meeting. It was the mother who had urged it from interested motives—from vanity, from a desire to encourage an intimacy with the Authemans, with people who were so rich!

And the mother cursed her own folly, and called herself by the harshest names.

“Albion!” was called by the guard.

She left the train without recognizing the station, without remembering the delightful party they had had there in the spring.

She remembered that Eline went to Port-Sauveur in an omnibus. She asked the question. No, there was no omnibus for this train; but she was shown a cross-road that took her to the Château in less than a half hour.



The weather was soft and mild, with a white mist rising from the ground after the deluge of the night, which by noon would condense into rain again or be dissipated by the sun.

Passing by high walls and iron gates, through which glimpses could be seen of green lawns and baskets of flowers, shining in the fog and suggesting the thin dresses worn by the Parisians the previous evening, Madame Ebsen soon found herself in the country; vineyards lay before her, and crows fluttered over the wide open spaces; potato fields, where bags were filled and laid in heaps, and where men and women at work made dark, indistinguishable spots in this white vapor.

The mother was oppressed by the sadness of this scene, as if it had been something tangible, and this oppression increased as she approached Port-Sauveur, the red roofs of which she perceived in the distance. After having passed the walls of an interminable park overhung with ivy and with woodbine reddening in the early autumn, she crossed the road and found herself on the banks of the Seine, and in front of the Château. The half-moon of turf, with its iron chains and pillars in front of the entrance, the long house and the monumental gratings, over which she could see nothing but the tops of trees, were all very dreary. She rang faintly; then once again, and while waiting for the door to be opened, prepared her little phrase, which should be brief and polite. But when the door was opened, she forgot everything and hastily cried:

“My daughter! Where is she? Quick—I wish to see her!”

The valet, in a colored apron, with a P. S. embroidered in silver on his collar of black cloth, answered as he had been bidden to do, that Mademoiselle Eline had left the Château the previous evening. And when the reply was received with a gesture of furious denial, he added: "But Madame is there—Madame will tell you."

She followed the man across the vestibule and up some steps, and found herself in a small green *salon*, where Madame Autheman was sitting at a desk writing. This well known face, this mild and yet imposing smile, softened the mother's anger.

"Oh! Madame, Madame. Lina—this letter—what does it all mean?"

And she burst into convulsive sobs, which shook her stout form in the most lamentable manner.

Madame Autheman believed that she could easily manage this weeping woman, and gently drew her to a seat on the divan.

"You must not despair in this way," she said; "you should rather rejoice and glorify the Lord, who has deigned to enlighten His child and draw her soul from the black sepulchre."

This mystical solace applied to this aching heart, affected it like a red-hot iron. The mother disengaged herself, and rising with dry eyes, said: "These are but phrases. My child, if you please. I want her."

"Eline is no longer here," said Madame Autheman, with a sad sigh at this sacrilegious revolt.

"Then tell me where she is. I insist on knowing where my daughter is."

Without being in the least moved, for she was accustomed to similar explanations, the President answered that Eline Ebsen had left France with the intention of bearing Gospel tidings to other lands. Perhaps in England, perhaps in Switzerland; it was not yet fully decided. She would, however, write to her mother of course, for whom she cherished and would always cherish the affection of a devoted and Christian daughter.

It was Eline's letter again, with a slight difference of phraseology, and uttered in a tone of slow, immovable sweetness, that threw Madame Ebsen into a rage which was almost that of an assassin, as she stood before this woman so carefully dressed in her black robe, which made her pale cheek look still more colorless. Her large, limpid eyes, which were almost without pupils, had all the hard coldness of stone, and were totally without feminine softness and tenderness.

"Oh! I would like to strangle her!" thought Madame Ebsen.

But her hands nervously clasped each other in an attitude of entreaty.

"Madame Autheman, give me back my little Lina. I have only her in the world. If she leaves me, I have nothing. We were so happy. You have seen my child in our home; you know how carefully she was watched and guarded. We were never separated—"

Sobs shook Madame Ebsen and prevented her from completing her sentence. She asked but one thing, only one thing, to see her child; and if all this were

true, if Lina told her so herself, then she would yield—this she would promise.

An interview! This was precisely what Jeanne did not intend to permit. She preferred to convince the mother—to try phrases from sermons—broken sentences from her little book, *Consolations in Jesus*. Affliction disposes to prayer, and by degrees becoming moved by her own words she ventured to say:

“But it is you, unhappy woman, it is your soul that Eline wishes to deliver, and your great sorrow is the beginning of your salvation.”

Madame Ebsen listened, with her eyes cast down; but heart and mind were eager in defense.

And suddenly, with the firmness of one who has arrived at a decision, she said: “It is well. You will not restore Lina to me, and I shall appeal to the law. We will see if such abominations shall be committed with impunity.”

Notwithstanding these threats, by which, however, she was little moved, Madame Autheman walked with Eline's mother as far as the terrace; then she signed to a domestic to accompany her further, and then turned away, cold and majestic as fate.

Madame Ebsen stood still, midway on the terrace. The daughter had walked here the previous day; nay, perhaps that very morning. She gazed out over the great silent park. Her eyes caught the gleam of the white cross guarding it as if it had been a cemetery, rising far above the creeping gray mist.

She would penetrate those woods; she would find the spot where her daughter was concealed, and would

force open the door with a mad cry of "Lina! Lina!" She would take her far away, restore her to life and happiness. These ideas flashed like lightning through her brain.

Then a sense of her utter powerlessness, overwhelmed her, for, in spite of herself, she was impressed by the visible signs of wealth and luxury all about her.

But justice was all she desired.

Determined and resolute, she went directly to the village. Her plan was formed, and it was a very simple one. She would see the mayor; she would make her complaint to him, and then she would return to the Château, with a policeman, some one who would compel the people there to restore her child, or make that wicked woman say what had become of her.

The success of this step on her part, she never doubted, and did not even ask herself if she had not best try some conciliatory means first. She had wept and entreated with clasped hands, and a deaf ear had been turned to her. So much the worse for the Château! She would teach this purloiner of children, that she could not carry on her evil work with impunity.

The one street of the village, along which cottages stood at regular intervals, with their little gardens drawn out like drawers to a bureau,—was absolutely deserted. All the inhabitants were in the fields at work, for it was harvest-time.

Occasionally a curtain would be drawn aside, a dog would run out to snuff at the stranger; but the curtain was dropped again, and the dog did not bark.

Nothing troubled this silence, which was like that of a prison or a penitentiary.

On a slight elevation, shaded by old elms, stood the Temple, flanked by two Evangelical schools, white and shining, even under the cloudy sky.

Under the high and open windows of the girls' school, she listened to a tumult of young voices, reciting in rhymic measure: "*Who-is-equal-to-the-Eternal-in-the-Heavens? Who is like the Eternal?*" And taps with a ferule on a table, quickened or lengthened the measure.

Suppose she should go in!

It was there that Eline had given her lessons. Perhaps she might learn something there. Who could tell that she might not find her attending to her class as usual. She pushed the door open; she saw four white walls covered with texts from the Scriptures; she saw long rows of desks, before which were black blouses and black aprons drawn close under brown, peasant faces. At the further end of the room stood a tall, pale woman, with a Bible in one hand, and a long ferule in the other. She came forward when she saw Madame Ebsen. The recitation stopped, and every young head was lifted curiously.

"Excuse me, Mademoiselle, I am Eline's-mother."

"Go on!" cried the startled teacher, Mademoiselle Hammer, speaking to the children as loudly as she could raise her humble voice.

And all the class began again in unison:

"*Oh-Eter-nal-God.*" Poor Miss Hammer, must indeed, have been terribly confused to drive back

He received his well-dressed guest with politeness and showed her into a small *salon* which was chilly from the dampness of the river, but was startled at her first words.

"It is an unhappy mother who comes to you for aid."

The poor man had not a cent to give, but he was still more dismayed at her second sentence.

"Madame Autheman has robbed me of my daughter." She did not notice the indifference and sudden coldness prevailing the countenance of this comfortable looking priest, and began to tell her long story. The *curé* remembered what his bishop had said about bankers, and the misadventure of Sister Octavie, and decided that it was not worth while to attempt for strangers, so dangerous a campaign.

He interrupted her after a little:

"Excuse me, Madame. You are a Protestant, are you not? Then how is it possible for me to interfere? these family affairs ought to be settled by your own pastors."

"But, sir, it is a question of humanity far more than of religion. A woman, a mother, appeals to you. You will not reject her."

He saw that he had spoken too harshly, and that he must cover his refusal with an envelope of compassion.

"Yes, certainly, the story of the poor lady was very sad and very touching; her tears went to his heart. The lady in question, it was unnecessary to particularize, carried into her religious convictions an enthusiasm that was too great, and her zeal as a Propagandist

was decidedly reprehensible. He himself had suffered from it more than once."

Women were always extravagant in such matters, and were apt to exceed the bounds of reason and commonsense. Catholic priests understood these excitable creatures, who under pretence of taking care of the altar and renewing the flowers, meddled in the affairs of the church. They knew that such natures at times became over-excited, and that they required careful management. But Protestant pastors had not the same authority.

What could be expected of a religion like this which permitted argument and criticism, a religion totally without discipline, where every one did and thought as he pleased, believed what he chose, and could even play at being a priest if the fancy seized him.

"Then think of the number of sects and beliefs!"

He became animated, for his heart was hot against Calvin and Luther, and he was proud of his erudition upon a subject which he had made his special study during the leisure permitted him by his duties. He went on to enumerate the innumerable sects which in consequence of the great schism between the Liberals and Orthodox, had divided the Reform.

"Count them," he said, as he lifted his fat fingers, on which oar and rudder had left callous lines. "You have the Irvingites, who wish to return to the early ideas of the Apostolic century, the Sabbathians, demanding a Sabbath like that of the Jews, the Peageris, whose devotion consists in striking their breasts fiercely. Then there were the Dubyists who rebelled



against any ecclesiastical organization and accepted no intermediary between their own pride and Almighty God, the Methodists, the Wesleyans, the Mormons, the Anabaptists, the Howlers, the Tremblers, and how many more?"

The poor woman listened bewildered and silenced by this theological vocabulary, as if these sects were so many barriers between herself and her daughter; she pressed her hand upon her eyes and murmured, "My child! My child!" in a tone so full of anguish, that the priest was really deeply moved.

"Madame," he said hastily, "there are laws of course. You can go to Corbeil and make your complaint before the courts. I know that you have a sad task before you, and one that may last for years, at least a case did under similar circumstances. But that was during the 'Sixteenth of May,' and you will be of course more fortunate under a Republican *régime*."

He emphasized these words with a certain malice.

"And is Corbeil far away?" asked the mother, hastily.

"No, Corbeil was not far away. She had but to follow the shore to Juvisy, where she would find a train that would take her there in twenty minutes."

She started off on the narrow path that led to Juvisy, whose white houses she could have seen clustered around the turn made by the Seine, at this point, if the fog had not been so thick that she could see nothing fifty feet away. The rain seemed congealed between the trees indistinctly seen along the shores.

Occasionally a wherry or two, with a fisherman sitting erect with outstretched rod, could be seen as the fog lifted a little. The silence was intense; it seemed a silence of expectation that weighed heavily on the already oppressed heart of the poor mother, who, moreover, had eaten nothing since the previous evening, and was so worn out by her tears that she staggered rather than walked over the grass-grown path.

Her thoughts wearied her, too, for they ran before her, going over the road again and again like a disobedient child.

She pictured herself entering the presence of the Procureur—what he would say to her and what she would reply. All at once the thought occurred to her of how she was toiling on alone through this mud, going in search of the police that she might restore her daughter to her arms, and a great wave of discouragement came over her.

What good could judges and soldiers do her now that her daughter loved her no longer? She repeated to herself word for word, the contents of that terrible letter she had read and re-read that morning.

*"God calls me. I am going to Him. Your devoted daughter."*

Lina! No it was impossible; there are some things that can never be believed.

As she thought of Eline's ingratitude, she involuntarily recalled all she had done for her. How she had toiled for her, watched over her, taught her and brought her up like a lady. She had patched her own garments and worn shabby clothes that her child's

wardrobe, when she was sent to boarding school, should be all new and nice. And when, at the end of so many privations, her child had grown to womanhood, beautiful and well-educated, this was the end. "God calls me. I am going to Him."

Her limbs trembled under her weight and she was compelled to sit down on a pile of stones which had been placed there for building purposes, among the reeds and tall plants which retained the rain in their calyxes, now green like cups of poison. She placed her wet feet on a board that sloped down to the river, and offered an easy solution to all her difficulties and despair. But she did not think of this. She was absorbed in a new idea, a terrible idea that had just occurred to her.

Suppose this woman had spoken the truth. Suppose it was really God who had taken her child.

For after all, this Jeanne Autheman was not a magician, and to gain possession in this way of grown girls of twenty, seemed to demand supernatural powers.

Disconnected phrases heard from the pulpit, words she had seen in books, now took form and shape in her troubled brain. She heard the Biblical words:

*"Love not. He shall leave his father or his mother."*

Against God nothing could prevail. Why was she going to Corbeil? What did she expect to obtain there? Justice? Justice against the Most High?

Crouching on the pile of stones, looking down on the oily Seine, starred here and there by large shining stains, she saw nothing clearly, could reason no longer.

And now the rain came, fine and penetrating, and the sky and water became indistinguishable. She had to struggle to her feet and resume her journey; but everything seemed to be whirling about her, the river and the trees, and she sank upon the wet, muddy grass, with her eyes closed and her arms helplessly outstretched, with a strange ringing in her ears, a bubbling like that of a boiling chaldron.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ROMAIN AND SYLVANIRE

AND this chaldron continued to boil and bubble, louder and louder, until her ears could bear no more.

Finally she opens her eyes and is astonished not to see the pile of stones.

What is this great bed in which she lies—and this room where the daylight filters through yellow curtains, and where flickering shadows play over the walls and ceilings as they do in houses close to a river? Madame Ebsen had seen this carpet with its roses before, and also this *naïf* display of chromos and engravings from old magazines, but she is still bewildered by the shouts under her window of “Romain, hallo, Romain!” rising above the rush of the water. Finally she sees a fair little head in a peasant’s cap thrust through a half-open door, and then the child runs away, calling, in Fanny’s sweet voice:

“Sylvanire, she is awake!”

And now the two, Sylvanire and Fanny, are established at the bedside. The poor mother is cheered by this loyal face and by the warm silken hair of the child pressed close against her cheek. “But what does it all mean?” she asked. “How did she get here?”

Sylvanire can tell her little. Yesterday, on return-

ing from catechism, Maurice found Madame Ebsen lying as if dead on the path by the side of the river.

"Apoplexy," the physician said, and he bled her twice; he knew by the way the blood flowed that he was right.

In spite of all that had happened, Sylvanire at once telegraphed to Mademoiselle Eline. It was easy to telegraph, for lock-masters have always wires in their houses.

Romain's wife stopped short in her narration, when she saw Madame Ebsen begin to sob and bury her white face in the pillows. The name of Eline had stung her to despair once again—her sick brain was rested by her brief repose.

"No Eline—gone—Madame Autheman."

From these disconnected words thus sobbed out, Sylvanire divined the catastrophe, and was not astonished. The lady of Port-Sauveur had done some hard things in her life—she had bewitched this poor child, as she had Damour's and Gelinot's, "by giving her a poisonous drink, you know."

"Do you really mean that?" asked the mother, only too glad to believe the legend that gives to the Authemans all responsibility for their crime.

"I am sure of it. If it were not so, you know—but don't be troubled, Madame, it will all come right. You will have the young lady back again; only you can do nothing here. The Authemans can do no wrong in this, their province. You must try in Paris. My master knows the Ministers: he will speak to them, and before long it will be all right."

Elphinstone



## L'ÉVANGÉLISTE.

This encouragement and cordiality transfused new courage and hope into the veins of the mother.

She thought of her rich and powerful friends, and of the Arlots. She will see them all; there will be a general expression of abhorrence against this wicked woman. But for Sylvanire, she would rise and depart at once. But she has been ordered a few days of rest, and is told that a heavy penalty will be exacted if she is obstinate. She will be reasonable for the sake of her child.

But her convalescence seemed to her endless, and the hours of waiting in that chamber at the lock were hard to bear. She was able to measure the passage of time by the departure of the chain. She counted the shallops stealing slowly along, with their owners, in cotton nightcaps, bending over their long oars.

In the evening, a red light glowed on her curtains. She watched it as it gradually faded away in the mist, and going with it thought: "They are at Albion, at Port à l'Anglaise, at Paris." In the devouring activity of her thoughts, this water, these people, these boats passing with such uniform slowness, exasperated her as a jest would have done. She divided her convalescence into stages: so many days in bed, so many in a chair, a little walking about the house to strengthen her limbs, and then she would start.

It was the restlessness and fever of a convict, who sees the end of his term of punishment near at hand.

She was greatly caressed at the lock. Romain, who was in the best of spirits because he had his wife with him, debarred himself of all indulgence in singing and

laughing, out of regard for the poor mother, and when he stole gently in to place on the table one of those huge bouquets of wild roses, iris and queen of the meadow, arranged as he alone could arrange them, he prepared himself to enter this chamber of mourning by thinking of sad things. He said to himself, over and over again :

“Suppose Sylvanire should be sick, or that her master should send for her to return and bring the children.”

His quiet gestures, his eyes hypocritically cast down, his “*cré cochon, Madame Ebsen!*” which he said over and over again in an utterly meaningless manner, irritated Sylvanire, who sent him away as soon as possible that he might dissipate in the open air the intoxication caused by his happiness, which was as selfish as most happiness is.

It was with little Fanny that the poor mother was best pleased. The child seated herself with her work by her side, and they talked steadily about Eline.

“You loved her well, child, did you not? You wanted her for your mamma, I am sure.”

At other times, on seeing the transformation of the child, the clumsy *fichu* that was wrapped around her slender shoulders, her cap and *sabots*, her little hands red and chilled like autumn apples, she felt all that intense sadness which comes to one in the presence of physical and moral degradation.

With Maurice all this was even more strongly marked. Of the future aspirant to naval distinction, who had been occasionally brought forward in the



*salons* of the Sub-Préfect, there remained only a ragged cap on a tanned and vigorous country lad.

Although still intended for *Navale*, he was at present released from study by the near approach of his first Communion. Except, therefore, for his catechism class, he led a delightfully idle existence—disturbed only each time he left the vestry-room by the attacks of young Nicolas of Port-Sauveur. He dreamed of this terrible enemy every night, and when he narrated these dreams to his little sister, she was grieved to see the future officer so cowardly, and would say, with flashing eyes:

“If it were I, you would see!”

At the lock they were all talking of these repeated skirmishes, from which Maurice returned pale, breathless and exhausted.

“He had better look out, this Nicolas!” said Sylvanire, “if I get hold of him!”

Fortunately for young Nicolas, numerous occupations kept her busy in the house.

In the first place, there was the telegraph, which Romain had taught her to work, then there was the cooking, her husband's linen to mend, wash and iron as well as that of the children, to say nothing of Baraquin's, for that renegade made part of the family, sleeping there and eating with them. This prevented them from talking of Eline and the Château at the table, for although Baraquin was not an ill-natured man, he would have sold his friends, his skin or his soul, as easily as he had sold the coats that had been given him for his Communion. This was why Sylvanire

felt such a distrust of him and waited always until he had left the room before she said what was on her mind.

Sylvanire's idea was, that Eline was still at the Château, and every day she sent Romain to watch the gate of the Château from his boat on the river, while she herself went about among the tradespeople, to the Evangelical baker's above whose counter were the words, "*Die here that you may live above,*" or to the grocer's where she saw the text, "*Set your heart on things above.*"

But no one had seen the pretty young lady, but every one knew whom she meant. As to trusting them with a letter or any commission, she might as well have asked their political opinions, and for whom they would vote at the impending elections.

They winked at her, and laughed in a malicious or an idiotic fashion, and that was all.

One evening Madame Damour entered the locksmith's cottage for a few minutes, and the sad face of this peasant woman in her shabby mourning, the dull resignation with an occasional flush of anger with which she spoke of her misfortune, filled Madame Ebsen with fright.

"You can't do anything, you see," said the hostess of the *Affameur*, in her sad voice and with her hands outspread on her knees, "the Authemans have killed my daughter, they have shut up my husband in a mad-house, but I could not help it! As I told the judge who wanted to put me in prison because of my words, there is no justice in these people."

In vain did Romain tell her that in this case it was not the same thing, that Madame Ebsen would employ powerful friends, Ministers and influential people; Mother Damour was unshaken in her conviction.

"There is nothing to be done, they are too rich. You had best give it all up."

Madame Ebsen, whose health was now much better, hastily rose, and leaving the room, walked for a few moments on the shore. At the end of the week she went away, eager to begin her work.

Sylvanire was right. Eline was under surveillance at the Retreat. Madame Autheman was there preparing her for her missionary labors, apart from the influence and dangers of terrestrial ties.

She was never left alone or unoccupied for a single moment. After the Theology of J. B. Crouzat, and Jeanne's conferences, came religious singing, meditations and prayers. Any intervals were filled up with walks on the arm of Anne de Beuil or of Chalmette, whose ardent words exalted her.

Generally these walks were confined to the veranda, on account of the autumn rains that saturated the trees, whose foliage had become very thin. Wrapped in water-proof cloaks, the five or six "Workers" then in the Retreat, paced the veranda with measured tread, their sad faces and dark forms, adding a touch of the misery of cities to the melancholy of the woods.

But the best hours of the neophyte were spent in the *rez de chaussée* of the châlet, in the room consecrated to prayer, which the projecting balcony left in semi-obscurity. There, soothed by the monotonous

refrains of the canticles, she abandoned herself to the delicious magnetism which by degrees affected her with vertigo.

The preparation for prayer consisted in kneeling with brow against the wall, in meditation, in an absorption of the whole being, which stiffened these female figures into the rigidity of marble, or caused them to sink into shapeless, crouching heaps upon the floor. Suddenly she who felt herself prepared and inspired, rose and went to the table. Standing there she improvised a prayer in a loud voice.

There were few phrases or sentences, there were the same cries and invocations over and over again.

*Jesus! Jesus! My Savior! Oh! Beloved Jesus! Glory! Glory! Help and pity for my soul.*

But in these improvisations there was an ardor and a spontaneity of effusion in which prayers learned by heart are often lacking, and the words were transfigured as in a dream, and became glorious.

At these times Eline forgot all her sorrows, and the horrible wrench that had torn her heart strings apart from all her old ties.

Carried away by her mystical enthusiasm, by an immense adoration for the Supreme, by a love above all other, a tremulous passion changed her voice and made it more pathetic and forcible.

Her childish features, her gentle blonde beauty became elevated as she spoke, and her tears falling fast on the soft color on her cheeks seemed to her the true baptism of regeneration, the salutary wave washing clean the sinful clay.

The other "Workers," peasants refined by nervous diseases, experienced the same exaltation in their prayers, but their rapture and ecstasy did not embellish them as they did Eline.

The little humpback became absolutely horrible; her eyes were haggard and fixed, and her deformed body was shaken with spasmodic trembling, while her mouth quivered as she called upon Jesus with convulsive grimaces.

This woman was known as a *convulsionnaire*.

The revivals and camp meetings of England and America, give us many similar examples. In those revivals, a kind of religious assembly, a little like our *jubilees*, and what the Swiss call "awakenings," these convulsive attacks are far from uncommon.

"At Bristol, during the sermons of Wesley, women fell back as if struck by lightning, penetrated to the heart by the words of the preacher. They lay upon the ground rigid and unconscious as if they had been dead bodies."<sup>1</sup>

And this visit to a Presbyterian church in Cincinnati.<sup>2</sup>

"From this mass of human creatures lying on the stones, came hysterical sobs, groans, sighs and inarticulate cries. An extremely pretty girl kneeling in front of us, in the attitude of Canova's Magdalen, after pouring forth an incredible amount of emotional jargon, burst into tears and cried out :

<sup>1</sup> History of Christian Revivals, by Dr. John Chapman.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Trollope.

“Anathema! Anathema on all apostates! Listen, listen, Oh Jesus! When I was fifteen my mother died, and I apostatized. Unite me to my mother, Oh Jesus, for I am very weary. Oh, John Mitchell! Oh, John Mitchell!”

All the workers of Port-Sauveur had attacks of this kind. Eline Ebsen was more dangerously affected than the others, through her naturally nervous disposition which had been over-excited by the death of her grandmother, and the manœuvres of Jeanne Autheman. And hers was a positive disease, with fluctuations and periods of intermittence.

When at night the girl was in the solitude of her little chamber, the pulsations of her heart were normal and filial. In vain did she say to herself over and over again, that the salvation of her mother made this separation necessary; that this season of trial was required to bring her to the feet of Jesus. In vain did she call to her aid all the verses of Holy Writ. The recollection of those precious days, when she was surrounded by those she loved, overwhelmed her and prevented her from praying.

In these hours, without faith, without effusion, hours which are the martyrdom of good priests, when frozen words fall from parched and rigid lips—when Saint Thérèse lamenting at the foot of the crucifix, and seeking to feel the emotion of the Divine Sacrifice, finds herself counting the wounds that redden the ivory,—in hours like these we say, Madame Ebsen would appear to her daughter, and extending her arms, with tears streaming down her face, would cry :

A lower cry, ending in sobs, answered her, and instantly the coachman raised his whip and the horse quickened his pace.

Fanny, without dropping her basket, began to run as fast as her slender limbs would carry her, breathlessly repeating her plaintive cry:

“Mamma! mamma!”

But she could not go far, weighed down as she was by her heavy clothing and the *sabots* that deformed her little feet. She made one more desperate rush and fell. When she rose with her poor maimed hands bleeding and covered with mud, there were no tears in her eyes, but the carriage was far away.

The child looked after it with a heavy line between her eyes, then seized with a sudden terror as if she understood or divined something terrible, she ran toward the lock.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## TOO RICH.

THE *rez-de-chaussée* of the Hôtel Gerspach, Rue Murillo.

All the servants in livery and gloved, stiff and erect, were standing against the wall in the ante-room. The Swiss at his table, portly and pompous, answered for the twentieth time:

"Madame La Baronne does not receive."

"But it is her day!"

"Yes, but a sudden illness—"

And at these words a little quiver passed over the well-shorn chins of the liveried servants.

This was an old fable, renewed each year; this sudden illness was a skin disease.

"She will see me—the Comtesse d'Arlot. I have only one word to say."

A bell was rung—a little discreet passing to and fro, and presently, to the astonishment of the whole corps, the order was given that the visitor should be shown in, although she was not on the list of intimates.

In the *salon* where Madame d'Arlot waited a few minutes, a large fire was burning brightly under a sheet of plate glass, through which the Parc Monceau could be seen, with its English lawns, its rookeries, its small temple shivering under the black sky, and its trees bare of leaves—a wintry landscape, that rendered



still more charming this interior, bright with lacquer and brass, and gay with striped Oriental hangings and a thousand pretty trifles. There were low screens near the windows and seats grouped invitingly around the chimney. Léonie, as she looked around this *salon* of a Parisian woman of fashion, remembered the time when she, too, received, had her day and a delightful house. But this was some time since, before she had learned to say "What is the use?" before she was utterly discouraged and desperate—before her husband spent all his time at the Club or the Chamber. Now she was constantly at church, and never received or paid visits.

A powerful motive was needed to bring her this morning to Deborah, who was an old friend of her boarding-school days, with whom she had long kept up an intimacy in spite of the different circles in which they moved; but since Léonie had renounced society they rarely met.

"If Madame will take the trouble," she heard a lacquey say.

And following him she was shown into the semi-obscurity of a large chamber with light hangings, but where the curtains were closely drawn.

"This way," said a plaintive, childish voice, coming from an immensely high bed with a canopy, "can this be really you?"

When Léonie's eyes were somewhat accustomed to the obscurity, she distinguished, amid hand-mirrors of all shapes and sizes, camel's hair pencils, powder boxes and pomades, which made of the Genoa velvet curtain

a back ground to a dressing-table worthy of an actress—the unfortunate Deborah, her pale olive skin, the Jewish skin, covered with some kind of ointment, as well as her hands and arms emerging from epaulettes of rich lace.

“You see it is just as it was at school. For a whole week I can go nowhere and see no one with these horrible things on my skin. It appeared this morning suddenly, on my day, of course. And to-morrow is the sale at the Embassy for the sufferers of—of—some-where. My dress has come from Veroust, and I am miserable!”

Tears ran over the cheeks, and washing off the ointment showed the trifling redness of the rash that wounded the vanity of this pretty woman.

What had she not tried to rid herself of this yearly recurring scourge? Louesche, Pongues, and mud from Saint-Amand.

“Yes, for five hours I was buried up to the chin in hot mud, through which ran little threads of water, tickling my skin like living creatures, but it was of no earthly use. Nothing can be done. It is in the blood, it is inherited with the gold of the Authemans, as that Clara said.”

Léonie recognized the same Deborah that she had known in the school at Bournon; the tall, good-natured girl, with the smallest possible amount of brains under her tawny hair, as beautiful and as expansive as in the days when she went to console her in the Infirmary.

“But here I am, weeping and moaning, instead of

asking you anything about yourself! And it is so long since I saw you! You are very thin. Are you any happier?"

"No," answered Madame d'Arlet, quietly

"Your old sorrow?"

"My old sorrow."

"I understand, poor darling—If anything of the kind happened to me—I do not say with the Baron, because the Baron, you know—but with some one I loved, I mean—Oh! good heavens!"

Holding up a little mirror, she with a hare's foot carefully obliterated the traces of her tears, and continued:

"Fortunately, you have your religion to console you."

"Yes, I have my religion," said the Comtesse, in her sad voice.

"Is it true, what Paule de Lostande was saying the other day, that your mother-in-law had given you two hundred thousand francs with which to found an orphan asylum?"

"My mother-in-law is very good to me."

She did not say that these royal generositys with which the old Marquise tried to efface the wrongs committed by her son, each time revived the sorrow they were meant to cure.

"That poor de Lostande! There is another woman who is most unhappy," continued Deborah, who in her despair liked to think of everything that was sad. "You know of her husband's death, after that fall from his horse on the day of a great review. She has never been able to console herself, and she has become

—what is it they call it—a Morphiomaniac. Yes, that is it. It is a little club, you know. When they meet, each of the ladies brings a little silver case with the needle and the poison, and then they put it into their arms or legs. It does not make them sleep, but it makes them comfortable. Unfortunately, each time a larger dose is required.”

“It is the same with me and my prayers,” murmured Léonie, bitterly; and then, in a tone of despair, she said, more loudly: “Ah! you see, there is nothing in the world like being loved!”

She checked herself, almost as startled as her friend at this cry of distress from her heart, which compelled her to turn away for a minute.

“Dear soul!” said Deborah, with an affectionate gesture, which suddenly reminded her of her uncovered arms and her own misery. “Ah! life is not gay,” she added, “there are misfortunes all about us. You know what has happened to our dear old friend, Madame Ebsen?”

At this name of Ebsen, Léonie shook away her tears.

“It is on her account that I am here!” She became somewhat excited as she went on. “She does not even know where her child is. This Jeanne Autheman is a monster!”

“She is not the least changed since our old school-days. You remember her trim little form, her stiff ways, and the tiny Bible she carried in the pocket where we girls wore our watches? She turned my head at one time, and I was quite ready to go to Africa with her. Think of me as a missionary among the negroes.”

It was certainly a little difficult to picture her in this capacity, on seeing her thus surrounded, with her unguents and her hair pencil, which she was slowly and caressingly moving up and down her statue-like throat.

"But your cousin Autheman, what does he say? How can he allow her to commit such atrocities? This poor mother would break your heart, were you to hear her tell her story. You haven't heard it then? I assure you it is almost incredible. She is in my carriage at the door. She would not come in, because she knew it was your day and she thought there would be people here; but if you wish—"

"No, no, I beg of you!" exclaimed Deborah, aghast. "The Baron has forbidden my interfering in this affair."

"The Baron? And why? I relied on you—on your *salon*, on this Chemineau, who is always here."

"No, dear, it cannot be. You have no idea what it would be in the bank if we turned this Autheman against us. We should be splintered like glass. But your husband is a Deputy now—a Deputy of the Opposition. He can do anything you want."

"I can ask nothing of my husband," said the Comtesse, rising.

Deborah retained her a moment, merely for form's sake, for the feeble creature was afraid of a debate, in which she knew in advance she should be worsted. Then, too, she was afraid that some one would see Madame Ebsen in her courtyard.

"I am sure, I am very sorry for you and this poor

woman. You will come and see me again? And to think I can't kiss you! Good-by, dear."

She sank back on her bed, seized by a new paroxysm of despair, and lay thus in her singular costume, her white arms and throat shining among the satins and laces—shedding no tears and making no movement, but uttering little inarticulate sounds, like a wonderful doll sent as a New-Year's gift.

As she went down the stairs covered with a bright carpet bordered with plush, Léonie d'Arlet said to herself: "If these are afraid, what will the others say?"

The affair seemed to have acquired a more complicated aspect in the last ten minutes. While she stood on the steps waiting for her carriage to come up, a name came to her mind. Yes, it was a good idea, and might lead to something.

She gave an address to her coachman, and took her seat by Madame Ebsen, who watched her with as disappointed an air as if she had expected her to appear with Eline.

"Well?"

"Oh! you know what Deborah is, indolent and silly. She has that old eruption out again and can think of nothing else. We are now going to Ravenaud."

"Ravenaud?"

The Danish lady did not even know the name of the most learned, the cleverest and the most subtle of all the lawyers in Paris.

When Léonie told her who he was, Madame Ebsen exclaimed with terror: "A lawsuit would take so long, and cost so much money."

Léonie reassured her.

They were going to him, she said, first as a friend. He would tell them what to do. He was an old friend of her father's, and it was he who had persuaded her to remain with her husband, and who had saved the honor of her family when she saw their happiness crumble around her.

Rue Saint-Guillaume. An old house that had been spared in the demolition of this corner of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and which retained something of the traditions of old France in the semi-circle over the door and in its broad, low, stone steps.

Ravenaud had just returned from the *Palais* and the Comtesse was immediately admitted without being shown into the waiting room, where innumerable clients were counting the minutes as impatiently as if in the house of a fashionable physician.

"What is it, dear child? No new trouble?"

"No, at least not for me, but for some whom I dearly love."

She presented Madame Ebsen, whom the lawyer interrogated mutely with his keen dark eyes.

The poor mother was greatly moved by this room, this silence, this refined, noble face and head.

And now she was to tell her story again. It seemed unnecessary to talk so much when she merely wished to have her child back.

"Tell me your story," said Ravenaud, and as Madame Ebsen had been a little deaf since her illness, he repeated his words.

She began, but her anger and indignation choked her.

All her words seemed to come at once in every tongue she knew, in Danish and in German, and these were most familiar to her; it required some effort to speak in French, the harsh "*ch*" of the North constantly recurred in spite of her efforts, and rendered more incoherent and breathless this most improbable tale.

"Her little Lina so sweet and loving, she had no one but her in the world." Then came a succession of confused statements, grandmother, the Presidente, the electric clock, the prayers at three sous, the drink that was given to the child.

"You understand?" she said in conclusion.

"None too well," murmured the lawyer.

Léonie tried to speak, but he stopped her.

"Then Madame, your daughter has left you?"

"No, no, not left me. They have stolen her from me, her and her heart too."

"And how? When?"

He questioned her until he had elicited all the facts one by one. He made her recite the terrible letter graven on the memory of the mother as by an indestructible mordant.

"And since her departure, have you had other letters from her?"

"Two, sir. One from London, the last from Zurich, but she is not there, not there!"

"Show me this letter from Zurich."

She took from her pocket her thimble, her spectacles, a picture of her daughter which she always carried about her, and then the letter, which she unfolded with



her large trembling hands and handed to the lawyer. He read it aloud, slowly and carefully. He was becoming interested in this unhappy woman.

"My Dear Mother:—As I consider it essential to give you some intelligence in regard to myself I do not wish to delay writing you any longer. But I have been greatly pained to learn the harm you have done by your falsehoods."

Madame Ebsen sobbed.

"And that you have not hesitated to accuse, and most unjustly, persons who have done us nothing but good. You have thus made it impossible for me to tell you where I am to be sent in the service of God, and to express to you all the respect of your affectionate daughter in Jesus,

"ELINE EBSSEN."

"Religious mania, disease of the nerves," said Ravenaud in a grave tone. "It is Bouchireau that manages that."

"Religious mania, disease of the nerves," were meaningless sounds in the ears of the mother, but she knew very well, she said, that but for the poisons that were given to her child this beloved daughter would never have written a letter like that; and surprising an incredulous smile on the lips of the lawyer, she rummaged once more in her pocket and handed him another paper covered with chemical formulas and with the names of alkaloids, *hyosganine*, *atropine*, *strychnine*. This paper bore the stamp of the first druggists in Paris. Since Eline's departure she had also found in her

drawer a box of pills and a bottle containing an extract of belladonna and a decoction of Saint Ignace beans, a combination which was at once stupefying and exciting, disturbing and destroying the brain. Madame Ebsen had had the contents of this bottle analyzed.

"Upon my life!" exclaimed Ravenaud, "and in 1880! How old is your daughter?" he added, sitting erect in his chair and thrusting his head out like a ferret at the entrance of a rat hole.

"Just twenty," said the mother in a tone of despair as she thought of the joyous birthday and the pretty *fête*.

The lawyer said aloud:

"It is a good cause!"

Léonie d'Arlot was triumphant.

"And it is not the first crime of this woman. We have other victims to show, other mothers even more unhappy than this one."

"And who is the lady?" asked Ravenaud, becoming a little excited.

Madame Ebsen was astonished that he did not know, and Léonie said:

"It is Madame Autheman."

The lawyer sank back in his chair in a discouraged attitude.

"Oh! in that case——"

His early training had given him self-control, and he did not finish his phrase, but in his heart he knew there was nothing to be done.

It became necessary on the contrary that he should persuade this poor woman not to embark in a lawsuit

which would be both dangerous and useless. The Authemans were too strong. They had reputation, morality, fortune. She must temporize.

Even were a suit begun, before it was ended Eline Ebsen would come of age, and naturally—

“Then there is no justice!” said Madame Ebsen in the very tone of the peasant of Petit-Port, for she thought of her as she spoke.

Ravenaud, who had just taken a card from a servant, now rose from his chair.

“Perhaps the Keeper of the Seals might demand an investigation as to the whereabouts of the girl. But how are we to induce the Minister to take so delicate a step—unless—you are a foreigner, a Dane, are you not? You can apply through your Consul.”

Then in a low tone to the Comtesse as he walked with her to the door:

“After all, the child is not unhappy?”

“No—but she—”

“She, oh! she is a mother, and all mothers are martyrs.” He changed his tone suddenly. “And about yourself? How is your husband getting on?”

“I know nothing about him.”

“You are still implacable then?”

“Yes.”

“He is quieting down however. He has political aspirations. His last speech at the Chambers—”

“Good bye, my kind friend.”

In the carriage the mother said, “I am cold.”

Her teeth were chattering.

“You must take me home, Léonie.”

"No, no, we must go first to your Consul? Where is he?"

"*Faubourg Poissonnière*. Monsieur Desnos."

Desnos was a great furniture maker; he had a great deal of wood from Norway and Denmark, and in the interest of his trade, had solicited and obtained this position as Consul. He was totally ignorant of the country he represented, its manners and customs, its language and its geographical position.

The office was on the right side of the court-yard overlooked by the windows of an enormous manufactory, which filled the air with the sound of hammering and sawing, and of some great steam apparatus. The same activity reigned within the counting-room, but here it was shown by the constant scratching of pens over the paper, by the examination of huge folios and by the quiver of gas burners above bowed heads.

Here as at the lawyer's, the name of the Comtesse d'Arlot commanded attention, and Desnos at once came forward to receive the ladies in his private room, separated from the work shop by a glass door through which long rows of men in blouses could be seen at work.

"Are the rooms lighted?" asked the manufacturer, supposing that they came for furniture. When he heard they had sought him as Consul, his smile faded and he became very serious.

"The Consulate hours are from two to four, but of course, ladies, as you are here—" With his hands crossed over his vest, comfortable and well-filled as that of a manufacturer ought to be, he listened to the measured jar of his steam machinery.

What was this story these ladies were telling him? Poison, Abduction—it was like a play at the *Ambigu*. How was it possible in Paris with a telephone within reach and his manufactory lighted with the Edison lamp for him to believe such an incredible tale?

Suddenly in the middle of the recital told alternately by the two ladies, for Madame Ebsen was so agitated that the Comtesse was obliged to come to her aid, Desnos rose in great anger.

He declined to hear another word, Autheman was his banker. There was not a wealthier, a safer, or a more honorable house. Never could such infamies have come to pass anywhere near the Authemans.

"Believe me Madame," he addressed the Comtesse all the time, as if the other lady had no concern in the matter, "you must not repeat these calumnies. The honor of the Authemans is the honor of the entire Parisian tradespeople."

He bowed. Time is very precious to business men particularly toward the end of the day, and the end of the week, but of course he would do anything in his power for the Comtesse.

"The Consulate hours," he repeated, "were from two to four, and his secretary was Monsieur Dahrelupe."

The court-yard was crowded with carts and wagons through which the two women endeavored to make their way to the coupé.

Madame Ebsen was gesticulating wildly.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "I am left alone then, everyone else is afraid!" Some workmen bringing in some

timber knocked against her, she tried to get out of their way, stumbled against a hand-cart, and deaf, awkward and heavy, uttered little frightened cries like a child. Léonie went to her and took her by the hand, asking herself as she did so, what would become of this poor creature if she were left alone to struggle with her sorrow.

"No," she said half aloud, "no, I will never desert her."

Early the next day, Monsieur d'Arlot should see the Minister.

"Ah! How good you are!" cried the poor woman, whose hot tears burned Léonie's gloves.

This was an immense sacrifice made by Léonie d'Arlot to her old friend. It was very difficult for her to appeal to her husband, for though they still lived under the same roof, it was as strangers. No one in the world knew less of her daily life and its interests than did he.

She thought of all this as she drove home. Every detail of her wrongs came to her memory again as if it had been yesterday. The little bride in her visiting dress, her ingenuous laugh and her confidences as to an elder sister—she heard the words, "And now I must go to see my uncle!" She remembered now, wondering at the delay, a sudden intuition of the truth came to her. She recalled the difficulty with which her feet carried her to the library and then the ghastly truth.

What kind of a life had her husband led since then? Had he made the smallest effort to obtain her forgive-

ness? No. He had been always at the Club or with actresses.

In the last six months he had become disgusted with one of his favorites, a former actress, who kept a little shop in the *Avenue de l'Opera*—with a back room which she could be easily induced to let—and had thrown himself into politics, a toy-shop, too, with a back-ground of villainies, and his home had suddenly become important to him as a place where he could bring his friends together, and without daring to make the request, he would have been glad to have his wife receive and go out—in short, he now for the first time wished her to forget the past.

Léonie saw this, but she was implacable. She said to herself:

“No, never; we are separated until death!”

After this paroxysm of indignation, she interrogated herself—remembered how void and how cold were her days, which her religious duties were inadequate to fill. She did not enjoy going from church to church to hear the celebrated preachers of the day, and was horribly weary after the long hours on her knees at Sainte-Clotilde's.

Her child was at her side to guard her from all temptations; but not to do evil seems very little to make out of one's life. Ah! yes, Ravenaud was right; “I am implacable.” Her heart, however, had become strangely softened in the last few hours; it was as if the hot tears of this poor mother had melted away the ice in which it was encased. This Ebsen tragedy had at all events aroused her from the mystic torpor from

which she had supposed there was no deliverance but death.

"My master is in the *salon* with Mademoiselle," said the lacquey, who opened the door when the wheels of her *coupé* were heard.

For the first time for years the *salon* was lighted, and before the piano sat the little girl, watched by her old governess, while she played for her father.

The Count looked down at the little fingers of his child as they wandered over the keys, and nodded approval. The scene was softly lighted by a large lamp covered by a shade.

"A little music before dinner," said the husband, bowing low, with a half smile that moved his blonde and close-cut beard—it was gray in places—and his large nose, to which his present parliamentary duties were to impart an air of majestic benevolence.

She, in her agitation, caused by this unexpected semblance of a home life she believed forever vanished, began to apologize for being late—undertook to explain, and then stopping short, said:

"I have a favor to ask of you, Henri."

Henri! For years he had not heard that name, for in the *Avenue de l'Opera*, Monsieur le Comte was known as Biquette.

The governess took the child by the hand and led her away; and while the Comtesse drew off her gloves and gave them with her hat to her *femme de chambre*, she told where she had been with Madame Ebsen, and how the very name of Autheman was heard with awe,



and how Ravenaud had advised her to appeal to the Keeper of the Seals.

She was standing in front of the chimney, slender and graceful, her charming face still animated by her day's occupation and by the bright flames at which she was warming, first one and then the other of her dainty feet. The favor she asked, the step she suggested of an appeal to the Keeper of the Seals, offered many difficulties.

Her husband went on to enumerate these difficulties. She took one step toward him and lifted her pretty eyes, in which was a greenish tint.

She said, softly :

"I beg of you—"

"You shall have anything, everything you wish, my dear."

He moved forward; he was about to snatch her to his heart, when the door was thrown open and an automatic voice announced that "Madame la Vicomtesse was served."

Henri d'Arlot drew his wife's arm through his own and went to the dining-room, where the father and mother were greeted by the inquisitive eyes of the child, already seated at the table. It seemed to the Count that this soft round arm trembled a little. This was the only result of all that Madame Ebsen had done that day.

## CHAPTER XV.

## A LAST LETTER.

“**P**RIDE—there is nothing but pride in that woman. She has neither heart nor entrails. The Anglican pest has devoured them. She is hard and cold as—as this marble.”

The old Dean, seated in front of the fire, struck the mantel as he spoke violently with the tongs which Bonne at once without a word took from his hands. He did not even notice this in his excitement, but went on with his account of his visit at the Hôtel Autheman. “I reasoned with her, I implored her, I threatened her, but could obtain nothing in reply except didactic phrases. Talk about the lukewarm faith of the present day, the necessity of great examples! She talked well, though there was too much jargon about Canaan. But she was eloquent, and entirely in earnest. I am not astonished that she disturbed that little brain. See what she did at Creuzat! But I had the satisfaction of telling her what I thought of her conduct.” He rose from his chair and began to pace the room.

“I said to her, for example: ‘Who are you, Madame? By what authority do you speak? Is it God who gives you this authority? No; for I see in your acts only your own cold, hard, wicked nature. You want something, I know not what, in life, and seem always athirst for vengeance.’”

"And the husband, was he there?" asked the little old woman, greatly startled. "And did he say nothing?"

"Not one word. He smiled faintly, and his eyes fairly burnt me like a lens in the sun."

"But sit down. I never saw you in such a state!"

Standing behind the chair, wherein the good man finally consented to take a little repose, his little wife wiped his broad, full brow, and removed the *foulard* from his neck, which he had forgotten when he came in.

"You have exerted yourself too much," she murmured.

"How could I help it. Such a misfortune and such injustice. I can't tell you how I pity that poor Lorie."

"Oh! as to him—" she said, with a contemptuous gesture, caused by her dislike of the man who had been preferred to her son.

"But the mother! The poor mother, who does not even know where her child is. You see, this woman's cruel silence is sanctioned by these men in authority. What would you do if you were Madame Ebsen?"

"What would I do? I would eat her head!"

This was said with such a fierce snap of the jaw, that the Dean laughed, and encouraged by his wife's indignation, continued:

"But they need not think they have got rid of me. Nothing will prevent me from speaking—from denouncing them in the most public manner, even if it should lead to the loss of my position."

These were unfortunate words, for they led the housekeeper and manager to a practical view of the

question. If his position was imperilled, of course that changed the whole state of things.

"You must not lift your finger, Albert. You must remain perfectly quiet."

"Bonne! Bonne!" implored the poor man.

But Bonne would not hear. If they were alone in the world, they might risk it; but their sons were to be thought of—Louis was expecting his promotion, Frederick was trying to get on. The Major was eager for the cross. The Authemans were powerful, and had but to lift their finger.

"And my duty?" murmured the Dean, whose resolution was faltering.

"You have done your duty, and far more. Do you think the Authemans will ever forgive what you have said to-day? Listen to me!"

And she took his hands, and argued with him. Would he like, at his age, to be running about for marriages and funerals? He continually said, "on the top of the hill, on the top of the hill;" but he had best remember the difficulty he had in climbing there, and at sixty-five, to be tumbled down again would be pretty hard lines.

"Bonne!"

This was the last resistance he made, for his wife's reasoning confirmed what his colleagues said. He had already called upon the Faculty, and had walked for some time around the little rectangular courtyard, which was only less dreary and sad than the terrible egotism of human nature.

This idea of once more climbing the hillside with his

aged, trembling limbs, appalled him; nor was he pleased when he thought of the domestic cyclones which would assail him if he did the many rash things he had contemplated after his visit to the Authemans.

But what a blow to the poor mother! She had come to him with such confidence, having no other support than his in the world. And now he must steal away—he must fly before this great grief, or calm it by vague and lying promises.

“Wait. God will not permit such things.”

Was he, in his old age, to become the Dean of hypocrites and liars?

From this day there was no more rest nor contented labor for old Aussandon. Remorse, that sinister intruder, installed himself at his table, and followed him everywhere he went—walked with him through the sordid Faubourg of Saint-Jacques, waited for him on the corner of the *Boulevard Arago* until he came out from his lecture, and it even came to pass that the Pastor dared not venture into his garden, though it was time that his seed should be sown—for his remorse there took a visible form; the pale face and reddened eyes of the mother, watching at the window, eager to see what religion could do for her, from whom religion had taken all that she valued in this world.

She quickly perceived that he too had deserted her, and she was not astonished, since all her friends had done the same. Fear had influenced some, pity others—because unable to do anything for her, her grief caused them infinite suffering. Then there were many who were perfectly incredulous in regard to this story,

which seemed as improbable to them as one of Anne Radcliffe's romances. How could such things take place in the nineteenth century, and in cultivated Paris! They shook their heads doubtfully, almost suspiciously, as much as to say, "Who can tell what is hidden under all this?"

Yes, Paris is cultivated, progressive and full of generous ideas; but it is superficial. Adventures succeed each other like the quick, sudden waves of the Mediterranean, each one scattering *débris*, to be, however, quickly submerged in the one that follows. There is no depth—nothing durable.

"Poor Madame Ebsen! It is really terrible!"

But the burning of the great shop known as "The Universe"—the woman cut into bits and found wrapped in "*Le Temps*," the suicide of the two little Cezarès—quickly succeeded with their claims to compassion.

The only house where she was still received with unwearying benevolence, mingled moreover with considerable gratitude, was at the Hôtel in the Rue Vezelay; but this was suddenly closed, and the Comte and the Comtesse d'Arlot went off to Nice with their child, after receiving a confidential report of the inquiry made by the Court of Corbeil.

To this report, which gave a very exact description of the Château, of the Schools and the Retreat, were added the names of "the Workers" who actually resided at Port-Sauveur.

Sophie Chalmette, 36 years; born at La Rochelle.

Marie Souchatte, 29 years; Petit-Port.

Bastienne Gélinot, 18 years; Attus Mons.

Louise Braun, 27 years; Berne.

Catherine Looth, 32 years, United States.

As to Eline Ebsen, she was travelling for "the Work" in Switzerland, Germany and England, without any fixed residence, and corresponded regularly with her mother.

For some time in fact, thanks to the good offices of the pastor, Birk, Madame Ebsen had been able to write to her daughter; but the addresses were always put on at Port Sauveur, her letters, therefore, were always sent there to be forwarded.

At first these letters were furious and desperate; they contained agonized appeals mingled with insults to the banker and his wife, but this was quickly modified by Eline's assurance that she would not reply to a letter that contained such accusations against friends whom she respected, and who were so entirely worthy of esteem.

Then the mother's complaints became more humble and more timid. She confined herself to pictures of her solitary, desolate life, which, however, in no way softened the cold, resolute tone of the young girl, as impersonal as was her handwriting, which seemed to have frozen into a long, regular English style, in which all the strokes were alike; news of her health, exalted, vague phrases about God's service, and ending with some mystical invocation or phrase of affection in Jesus, replaced the pretty effusion, the messages and the kisses of the old days. Nothing could be more singular than this epistolary dialogue, this contrast of

emotional jargon with the accent of natural tenderness; earth and heaven were in communication, but the distance was too great for them to understand each other, and the sensitive, outstretching tendrils were broken and floating in space. The mother wrote:

"My cherished child, where are you? What are you doing? I am thinking of you, and my tears are falling fast. Yesterday was All Souls' Day. I went to the Cemetery and laid on your grandmother's tomb a little bouquet which I now send to you."

The child replied:

"I thank you for your remembrance, but the thought that I possess for eternity a living Saviour is more precious to me than these miserable flowers. It is at the feet of that God, dear mother, that I ardently desire you to seek for that pardon, that peace and that consolation, which He will give you so freely."

And yet these icy, desolating letters, were all this poor mother had. She dried her tears only to read them, and found in her eager expectation and hope when she opened the envelope with trembling hands, courage to live and courage to struggle. The things the poor woman did, and still more those she proposed to do, filled good Monsieur Birk with solicitude for his poor friend. She said she would go in a carriage to Madame Autheman's door, and waiting until that lady came out, would then follow her all through the streets crying, "My child! Give me my child!"

"Or," she added quickly, "shall I go to London, Bâle, Zurich, and pursue my inquiries myself, as I was advised to do at the '*Bureau des recherches*'?"



"Poor friend! poor friend! You surely are not thinking of such steps as these? Such journeys would be your ruin. Neither your health nor your purse would permit them; and any violence in Paris would expose you to imprisonment, or even worse."

Birk did not say what this worse could be, but his eyes and the raised points of his apostle-like beard, expressed absolute terror. Then taking her hands in his heavy, damp fingers, odorous of the pomade he used on his long hair, he soothed and comforted her.

"Let me attend to all this for you. I am at Port-Sauveur still; I remain there on your account. Believe me, your child will be restored to you."

How mistaken one can be about people! This man who had displeased her so much, whom she distrusted because of his evident pursuit of a dowry, was the only one who had not deserted her, who still continued to come to see her and keep her in some degree connected with the world outside. He even wanted her to eat the national risengrod in his bachelor quarters, which had been embellished and almost furnished by his devotees. And each time as he took her home he said to her:

"You need some distraction, my poor friend."

But what distraction could make her forget for one moment, this persistent and engrossing anguish,—the one idea which every thing revived?

Eline, when she went away, had taken nothing with her, neither clothing nor linen,—the house was full of her,—and from the wardrobe and the open drawer came the faint perfume of which she was fond; this

and innumerable trifles scattered about, were to the mother living likenesses of her child.

On the table lay the long, green book in which the young girl each evening inscribed their little daily expenses.

These careful accounts with their regular columns of figures, told a plain story of the child's busy life, of her honesty and her courage, and of her constant, unselfish care and thought of others.

*A coat for Fanny.*

*Lent to Henriette.*

The day of St. Elizabeth, the *fête* of Madame Ebsen, had *bouquet* and *surprise* against it, and on the margin of the page was written these tender words:

"I love my dear mamma."

This was a sensible little volume, such as is often preserved in families and which old Montaigne called, "so pleasant to see, so excellent to extricate us from trouble."

But in this case trouble was aggravated by the examination of these pages; and when in the evening, Madame Ebsen turned over the green account book with Lorie, tears filled their eyes and they dared not look at each other.

It was almost to Lorie like losing another wife. He wore no mourning, but the blow was a cruel one. He was humiliated at his own inability to adequately occupy the heart of this young girl, who, so calm and serene in appearance, was really athirst with a longing that she had gone to seek in higher realms.

Her departure, without his admitting it, had soothed

his wounded self-love; he was not the only one who had been deserted, and drawn toward each other by their common grief, the mother and he renewed their affectionate intimacy.

On returning from his office he went directly to her rooms to ascertain if she had any news, and passed long hours listening to the same story repeated over and over again with the same phrases, the same outbursts of sobs; and in this quiet little *salon* and in this scene, all unchanged, his eyes instinctively turned to seek Eline and the grandmother, in their favorite corner, the corner that the clear, ringing laugh of the girl had once made so gay, and where now reigned the darkness and oblivion that follow death and departure.

Madame Ebsen could not remain in the house where she was alone all day, and as soon as her household duties were completed went out to see friends, her former Sunday visitors, the wall-flowers; they placidly permitted her to tell her story of the abduction of her daughter and the beans of Saint-Ignace over and over again.

Then, restless with that agitation which accompanies a fixed idea, as if the body were desirous of reëstablishing the moral condition of its being, she started forth, wandering about the streets, becoming one of that vast horde of Parisian *flâneurs*, who stop wherever a little crowd is gathered, who stare in at the shop windows, lean over the parapets of bridges with the same indifferent eyes for the water that runs, the omnibus that had lost its wheel, and the display of the last fashions.

Who knows how many inventors, poets, and impassioned lovers, criminals or madmen may be among these people who hurry on in pursuit of a chimera, or to fly from remorse. Somnambulists with one idea, hermits amid a crowd, these *flâneurs* are the most absorbed of all men in the world, nothing distracts them, neither the clouds on which they fix unseeing eyes, nor the elbowing crowd. In all these wanderings through Paris, Madame Ebsen invariably returned to the same point, the Hôtel Autheman, where she had at first attempted to introduce herself with the hope of obtaining some information from the servants. But she soon realized the impracticability of such attempts. She therefore contented herself with wandering about the Hôtel, drawn there by a strange instinct, although knowing that her daughter was not in France, and with standing for hours on a slight elevation in a vacant lot opposite the Hôtel. From this point she could look into the court-yard and count all the windows, in the dark gray walls with their carved caps.

Carriages stood at the door, people went in and came out carrying portfolios guarded with steel chains, or bending under bags of gold.

Everything was very quiet, not a sound save the musical tinkle of gold, an incessant murmuring stream which spread over Paris, France, and all the world, and became the great impetuous flood, foaming and seething, known as the fortune of the Authemans, which terrified the strongest and the highest, and even disturbed the firmest and most rigid consciences.

Sometimes Madame Ebsen saw the great gate open and the chestnut coupé with the piebald horses roll out. She would have recognized it without the cruel, authoritative face of which she caught a glimpse through the clear glass, and which awoke in her a longing to commit some rash act, such as had hitherto been held in check by the Pastor Birk, and by her fear of imprisonment or of that terrible and mysterious something which he feared to name.

And when she returned home, worn out by these long walks, and after staying out of doors as long as possible to allow the unforeseen time to arrive, with what quick beating of the heart, with what intolerable anguish did she ask each time:

"Is there nothing for me, mother Blot?"

What did she find? Occasionally a cold letter from her "devoted" daughter, but never, never, that which she hoped, but which she never dared to say.

One day, however, the bell rang suddenly and violently in a way that sent her to the door with trembling hands.

As she opened it, affectionate arms were flung around her, the flowers on a summer hat, damp with the snow that was falling, moistened her cheek.

Henriette Briss! She had just left her situation at Copenhagen with the Ambassador of Russia—"Excellent people, but so vulgar!"

She could not stay any longer away from Paris, notwithstanding all that the former Superior of the Sacré Cœur had written her, "that Paris was to her like a razor in the hands of a two-year-old child."

As she spoke, Henriette entered the room she knew so well, and established herself as if she were at home, without noticing, in her gay absorption, the desolate face of the poor mother.

Suddenly she turned with one of her quick movements, which always suggested those of a goat:

"And Lina? Where is she? How soon will she be home?"

A sob answered her. "Ah! Lina—there is no Lina now. She is gone. Stolen. They have taken her from me. I am alone."

For a minute Henriette could not understand, and even when she did, it seemed to her impossible that Lina, sensible and practical as she was, with her intense affection for her people—

But then this Jeanne Autheman understood how to reach the souls of those with whom she came in contact, and Henriette, while the mother wept, looked toward two or three little books with gilt edges that lay on the table as tangible proofs of what had occurred. "*Morning Hours*," "*Conversations with a Christian Soul*."

"Really, if this woman were not a Protestant, one would be tempted to think her a sister of Antoinette Bourignon."

"Bourignon?" said the mother, drying her eyes, "and who is she?"

"What! do you not know? A prophetess of the time of Madame Guyon; she has written more than twenty volumes."

"It does not matter who she was," said Madame Ebsen gravely. "If she too brought tears to the eyes

of mothers, she was not good, and I do not care to talk of her."

Instinct warned the mother that Henriette was not with her in her grief, and that the girl hesitated to express all that trembled on her lips, and caused that feverish glitter in her pale eyes. Her bony fingers quivered as they turned over the leaves of the little volumes.

"Would you lend me this?" asked the pupil of the Sacré Cœur, devoured by a desire to read these "*Conversations*," that she might refute the heresies.

"Oh! take them, take them all."

Henriette embraced her with enthusiasm, and as she hurried away, threw back her address over her shoulder; Rue de Sèvres, with a decorator, a family by the name of Magnabos, excellent people, in a good part of the city; this *quartier* had many convents in it.

"Come and see me, you need distraction."

This visit with all its associations, and the recollections it awakened of the old discussions when Lina had shown such common sense and goodness, was to poor Madame Ebsen a terrible trial, as were also certain anniversaries when the mother and daughter had rejoiced or wept together, the *juleaften* without a Christmas tree, or *risengrod* this year, the anniversary of grandmother's death, the sad pilgrimage to her grave, and the still sadder return home.

Was it not after coming from the funeral last year that Eline had sworn "to love her well, and never to leave her?"

Under the impression of this recollection she wrote

to her daughter the following broken-hearted, entreating letter :

"If I could only write and give lessons, that would take up my time and my thoughts, but sorrow has exhausted my strength, my eyes are burned with tears, and since my illness I hear with difficulty. My money, too, is nearly exhausted ; in a few months it will be all gone, and then what will become of me ?

"Oh ! my darling, I watch for you on bended knees. It is no longer your mother who supplicates, it is only a most unhappy old woman."

The reply was on a postal card postmarked Jersey ; it was open and could be read by any one :

"I am deeply pained, my dear mother, at the bad news you give me concerning your health, but I am consoled when I remember that these trials draw you each day nearer to God. As to myself I am concerned only in your eternal salvation and my own. I must continue to live free from the world and thus keep myself from evil."

Cruelty of cruelties !

No more intimacy is to be allowed, no more whispered words, no more quiet tears. Ah ! the wretches ! And this is what they have made of my daughter. "*I keep myself from evil.*"

"I shall not write to her again. She is lost to me."

And in her heavy handwriting the mother inscribed across the address, "*Last letter from my child.*"



"Madame Ebsen! Madame Ebsen!"

Some one was calling her from the garden. She dried her eyes and tottered to the window. She saw Monsieur Aussandon lifting his fine white head toward her, "I preach tomorrow at 'The Oratory.' It is for you. Come. You will be pleased."

He bowed, lifting his cap, and turning away, continued his inspection of his rose-trees, where green shoots were already showing themselves. It was easy to see that Madame Aussandon was not at home by the old Dean's being out in this bleak, pernicious March day.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## "THE ORATORY."

THE vestry-room, where the preachers at the Temple, known as the Oratory, robed themselves, was a simple, dreary place, with its straw chairs, its pine wood table, its porcelain stove, like those seen at a coast-guard station. Aussandon was there and surrounded by pastors, his colleagues at the Faculty. They were all talking together in low voices, while carriages rolled up and stopped before the two doors of the Temple, which was gradually becoming crowded. The old Dean, ready to appear, wore his black robe and white bands, a dress more suggestive of the *Palais de Justice* than of a church, but in the opinion of those of the Evangelical faith, all the more suitable since the minister, by the Reformed Church, is regarded only as a simple advocate of God.

This was especially Aussandon's rôle that day, for the notes he was turning over at the end of the table was a terrible argument against the Authemans.

For five months he had hesitated, because of the consequences that would fall on him and his, and also because Bonne was not there to watch him.

The old lady was finally summoned to Commentry by the birth of a grandson; and the Dean, seeing in this the merciful interposition of God—and a tender regard for the honor and repose of his conscience, as

well as profound pity for his weakness as a man—set himself at once to work. When his discourse was ready—and he had written it in two evenings, for his ideas had been seething for a long time in his head in such a way as to render him nearly mad—he begged one of the preachers, whose name was on the door of the *Oratory*, to yield him his Sunday; and for the last week all Protestant Paris had been eager to hear the illustrious Dean thundering for the last time like Bossuet, when Mademoiselle de La Vallière took the veil, “after a silence of so many years, that his voice would hardly be recognized in the pulpit.”

Carriages continued to roll up to the Temple, with a great noise of doors shutting; horses trampled and pawed the ground, and the murmur of the crowd in the corridor continued, while every moment a new deacon or vestry-man appeared in the robing-room.

Good morning. We are all here, I think.”

“Good morning—good morning, Monsieur Arles.”

“I have not seen the placard. On what do you preach?”

“The Gospel for the day. The Sermon on the Mount.”

“You think you are back again at Mondardier with your wood-cutters.”

“No, no; my sermon is intended for Paris. I had something to say before I died.”

One of his colleagues in the Theological Faculty murmured in his ear as he passed:

“Take care, Aussandon.”

The Dean shook his head, without replying. He

knew these prudential warnings well, he had heard them many times.

Had he not been, over and over again, to the Hôtel Autheman, to ask but one thing of that hard and pitiless woman? He begged her to tell where Lina was. He meant to go to the child himself, and bring the poor, distracted creature back to her mother's arms. But Madame Autheman steadily replied:

"I know not. God has taken her."

And when the Dean threatened her that he would denounce her publicly, she answered:

"Do so, Dean Aussandon, we will all go to hear you."

And she should hear him, the wretch!

It was with a sudden spasm of anger that he mounted the little winding staircase that led to the pulpit, pushed open a low door and entered into the light and air of the immense building.

The old church of the Oratorians, ceded to the Protestants by the Concordat, is the largest and most imposing temple in Paris. The more recent ones are not well calculated to arouse religious sentiment. The aristocratic temple of the Rue Roquépine is circular and lighted from above. This and its white walls resembles the Grain Exchange. Saint André, the church of the Liberals, with its large galleries, suggests a *café* concert. The Oratory, however, symbolizes all the dogmas of the Reformation and of pure Christianity—extinguished candles, absent images, high, bare walls, bearing only fragmentary sentences and verses. Most of the chapels have been walled up;

several of the tribunes have been retained; the choir has been suppressed, and the organ stands in the place of the altar; and all the life of the Temple is grouped before the pulpit, about a long table, generally covered with a cloth; but on Communion Sundays, baskets stand upon it, and cups of silver, gilt.

This is the only religious preparation, and this simplicity, increased by the height of the ceiling and the long, arched windows, becomes solemnity when the Oratory is full, as it is to-day—black with the crowd on its benches, in its tribunes, and even on the irregular steps at the two entrances. Above the principal door flamed, in a stained-glass window, an enormous cross of the Legion of Honor, with a wide, purple ribbon—a souvenir of the first pastor, who was decorated after the Concordat. The light coming through this window irradiated the Temple and flushed the wall, the organ pipes, and lingered on the cups on the Communion table at the foot of the pulpit, where every eye was fixed awaiting the pastor.

As yet he was invisible, for seated in a corner, Aussandon was trying to appease the emotion that quickened the beating of his heart each time he came to plead God's cause in the Temple.

With the facility which orators and actors have of distinguishing faces in an audience, he noticed the absence of Autheman from the elders' seat, but sees directly in front of him and just where he would naturally direct his discourse, the erect figure of the banker's wife, her small, pale face and steady eyes, which seemed to burn and magnetise him. And in

the tribune—those bowed shoulders, that mass of black drapery and heavy vails, is the mother—faithful to the rendezvous and deeply agitated.

She knows that at last the hour of justice has dawned—that this great orator will rise in the pulpit for her. For her is this crowd of wealth and celebrity, these equipages at the door, and this music, which brings the tears to her eyes. For her this Gospel that begins the service, and those wonderful verses from the Sermon on the Mount, that pass over her burning eyelids like a fresh breeze.

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

“Oh! yes, hunger and thirst after righteousness—”

And at each allusion to the Bible, she pressed Lorie's hand, who is seated by her side, almost as much agitated as herself. Then a choir of women's voices intone, supported by the organ, Marot's hymn:

Seigneur, écoute mon bon droit;  
Entends ma voix quand je te crie.

It is the cry of her distress that rises toward the lofty arches, on voices as fresh and young as that of her lost Eline.

But Aussandon now emerges from the shadow, and proudly bearing his seventy years, his noble head rising above the white bands and Judge's robe, he begins to recite in a rich, sonorous voice, the verse he has taken for his text:

"Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have we cast out devils? and in thy name done wonderful works?"

He then began his sermon in a lower voice, for it was now the man speaking after God.

"My brothers, it is now three hundred years since Pierre Ayzant, an advocate in the Parliament of Paris, a savant and a sage, had a great sorrow. He lost his only son, who was abducted by the Jesuits, and enrolled in their Order. He was never permitted to see his family again. The despair of the father was immense, and so eloquent, that the King, the Parliament, and even the Pope, interposed for the restoration of the son, who, however, could never be found. Pierre wrote his treatise on "Paternal Authority," and then laid down on his bed, and died of a broken heart. Three centuries later, Protestants and Christians of the Reformed religion, have repeated that abominable act." He went on to describe the disappearance of the child, and the agonized grief of the mother.

"She has written no treatise; she has disturbed neither King nor Parliament. She is one of the poor and lowly, spoken of in the Scriptures, who has only her tears, and who gives them in one perpetual fountain." Up to this time the pastor had made no personal allusion; he said nothing to designate the criminals, and his hearers were still in doubt.

But when he began to speak of a woman with a pitiless heart, sheltering herself and her acts under a respected name, and a colossal fortune, every one in the Temple understood that it was a direct attack on

Madame Autheman, who sat with her face uplifted to the orator, her eyes fixed on his, and without the faintest flush rising to her clear, pale cheek. Aussandon's rich voice continued to roll and thunder like a mountain storm, reverberating through the hills.

It was long since the Temple had echoed other than the rounded phrases, the smooth and unctuous words of the true Ecclesiastical type, and these images drawn from nature, these bold and simple words, were new and startling.

The nave was fragrant with the aromatic odor of pine woods, and with the rustle of green leaves and the tinkling of summer brooks, awakened by the Biblical phraseology employed by the Dean, for the Bible in its simplicity and its primitive grandeur, is essentially the book for the open air.

What contempt he showers on "The Work" of the Evangelical ladies, without, however, naming it. He calls it, and all other pious associations of the same kind, the excrescences of the Tree of Christianity, the parasites which devour its juices.

In order that this tree may preserve its strength and its sap, these offending growths must be at once exterminated; and this old pastor raises the axe to cut away these public professions, these mystical representations, these séances no less absurd, but more dangerous than the "Sabbats" of that "Salvation Army" which covers Paris from one end to the other with gigantic placards, and places young girls at the corners of the street, who distribute "Calls to Jesus" to every one who passes.



And, suddenly, with a broad and comprehensive gesture, which seems to set aside the scales of the flesh and the Temple, and to penetrate the veiled mystery of clouds, he cries :

“Great God ! God of Charity, of Pity and of Justice, —Shepherd of men and of the stars, behold the caricature they make of Thy Divinity ; although Thou in Thy Sermon on the Mount hath cursed and denied false prophets, and the workers of miracles, they still continue to commit crimes in Thy name. Their lying tongues envelope, as in a thick fog, Thy Religion of Light ; and this is why Thine aged servant, heavy with years, and already entered into that night when one thinks and is silent, once more lifts up his voice to denounce these acts before all Christianity, lest Thou again shalt utter Thy malediction, “Depart from me ; I have never known you.”

The words of the pastor fell on that profound silence which is the applause of religious assemblies. Eyes were full of tears, and long drawn breaths were heard as the Dean ceased speaking, while in her corner the poor mother sobbed aloud with her face in her hands. The tears however, comforted her now, they had lost their bitterness. She was revenged, and relieved from the anguish she had felt, at the thought that God was with these wicked people.

No, no ! The God of justice is with her. He protects. He commands !

Eline will listen to Him, she will certainly return to her mother.

And now the Dean has descended from the pulpit

and stands before the long table on which the wine trembles in the silver cups between the four baskets heaped with bread, and while he recites the simple, beautiful prayers which precede the Holy Communion.

As he uttered the words "Listen, my brothers, our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Communion," he started as he saw the banker's wife sitting on the bench in front of him.

What was this proud woman doing here after what she had heard? Why had she not risen and gone out when the pastor had pronounced the benediction and requested those who were not to participate in the Communion to retire "decently and in order."

Would she actually have the audacity—

And emphasizing his words he went on with the service.

"Ye who mind to come to the Holy Communion must diligently examine yourself before you presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup, for whosoever eats and drinks of them unworthily eats and drinks of his own condemnation."

She had not moved; every other head in the sanctuary was bowed, and he met her clear, steady eyes. She puzzled him. For the second time he repeated the solemn words.

"If there be any among you who do not repent of their sins, and are not ready to repair the evil you have done to your neighbor, I declare that you are not worthy to draw nigh unto this table, and I bid you depart."

All those Christians were so sure of themselves that

not one trembled, the imposing solemnity of this crowd now standing was unmoved.

Then the pastor in a solemn voice, said :

“Approach the table of the Lord, my brothers.”

The organ pealed out, the first rank moved forward and formed themselves in a semi-circle in the empty space around the table.

There was no hierarchical order, the servant stood by the side of his master. The English hat of the governess was next rich toilettes. It was a cold and dignified spectacle, entirely in accordance with the bare walls, the bread in the baskets, and the absolute simplicity which more nearly approached the primitive church than do the Catholics with their cloths embroidered with symbols.

After a short, silent prayer, the pastor lifting his head, sees Madame Autheman standing near him on his right.

It is with her that he must begin the office, and her compressed lips, her pallor tells him that she comes, not repentant but defiant, braving him who has just denounced her publicly.

Aussandon is also very pale. He has broken the bread, he holds it above the basket while the organ dies away like the murmur of the sea, permitting the solemn words to be heard.

“The bread that we break is the body of Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A small, ungloved hand is advanced. He does not seem to see it, but without any perceptible movement of the lips, he says :

"Where is Lina?"

"I know not."

"Where is Lina?" he asks again.

"I know not. God has taken her."

Then he said aloud, in a stern voice:

"Retire, you are unworthy. There is nothing for you at the table of the Lord."

Every one heard these words and understood his gesture. While the basket circulates around the table from hand to hand, Jeanne Autheman, after standing a moment as if stunned, turns away, proud and erect in spite of the insult she had received and disappeared in the crowd. She was certainly far less agitated than was the Dean, who with difficulty controlled his emotion.

He had hardly strength to lift the dripping cup in his hands. And when the service was over and the sacred bread and wine removed from the table, it was with a choked voice that he uttered his prayer, and the aged hands were hardly steady enough to be raised in benediction.

Generally after morning worship, the sacristy was crowded with friends who came to offer a tribute of admiration to the preacher.

But Aussandon is to-day entirely alone in that great room adorned by portraits and busts of all the celebrated reformers, and what he had seen as he passed through the crowd, the startled disapproval and uneasiness on all the faces gave grave significance to his isolation.

This refusal of the Holy Communion was an almost unheard of thing. He had overstepped his rights as a

pastor, and this abuse of power will cost him dear. Once at Lyons the same thing had occurred, resulting in the clergyman being dismissed and the Temple closed.

And as the Dean sat absorbed in these sad thoughts, his eyes chanced to rest on an old engraving hanging upon the wall. It represented "A Pastor in the Desert" in the times of religious persecutions. Bourgeois, peasants, children and old people were all on their knees, and the preacher wore his black gown. This mountainous scene, these rocks of basalt between umbrageous chestnut trees, recalled his life in Mezene among the simple in heart. Ah! well, let them remove him, let them even refuse to allow him to hold a parish as insignificant as Mondardier, he could sleep in the huts of the charcoal burners, and hold worship under the open sky among the flocks and the shepherds.

Yes, but Bonne!

He had not thought of her, and yet the little wife would be at home in two days. What a scene there would be.

And he, the Dean of the Church, he, the administrator of the Justice of God, who had not been deterred by the vengeance of the Authemans or the gravity of the stand he took, trembles from head to foot at the thought of the angry little woman, and begins at once to form phrases for the letter which he will write to soften the shock of the news on her arrival.

The sexton and his wife now came in to arrange the room and replace the Communion service. They do

not speak to the Pastor; it seems as if they were afraid of being compromised. It is always from such people, from those lower in the social circle than ourselves that we learn our humiliations.

He rose from his chair with an effort, intending to go to the dressing-room to remove his robe.

In the deserted Temple there is a faint stir like that which jars a steamer when the machinery is suddenly stopped. Darkness and shadows are creeping in. The heavy rugs laid down between the Holy Table and the Deacons' bench are already piled up, and the church is as dreary as a theatre when the curtain has fallen. Aussandon entered the vestry and stopped short in absolute terror. His wife is there. She has seen everything, heard everything—and as she hears his step she comes forward with her jaw advanced and her hat half tumbling off her gray hair.

“Bonne!” gasped the poor Dean.

She did not allow him to continue.

“Ah! my husband—my dear husband—brave man!”

And she threw herself into his arms with an outburst of tears and sobs.

“What! Do you know?”

Yes, she knew, and he had done a noble act. This woman, who stole children from their mothers, had received the chastisement she deserved.

How magical had been his voice and his words! They had convinced this little woman, and compelled her to discard every selfish consideration.

“Bonne! Bonne!” murmured the Dean, as he held the little woman close to his heart and half smothered

her in the folds of his black robe. Ah! they might do what they pleased, now; they might dismiss him from the ministry, or send him where they chose, he cares little now; he knows that Bonne is pleased with him. Together they will climb the hill again, slowly and with the tottering footsteps of the aged, but each confident in the support of the other, and strong in the satisfaction of having done their duty.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## GABRIELLE'S SEAT.

**L**ONG before the hour at which he was accustomed to return from the Department, Lorie-Dufresne entered Madame Ebsen's presence.

She looked up; his pallor, his haste and his cautious manner of closing the door startled the good woman.

"What is the matter?"

"You must hide yourself, Madame Ebsen. You must go somewhere. They are going to arrest you."

She looked at him.

"Arrest me? me? And why?"

Lorie dropped his voice as if he were afraid of the terrible words that he with difficulty articulated.

"Madness—sequestration."

"Do you mean that they intend to shut me up? I am not mad!"

"There is a certificate from Falconnet. I have seen it."

"A certificate? Falconnet?"

"Yes, the mad Doctor. You dined with him."

"Dined with him?" She stopped short with a little cry. "Ah! my God!"

One day at Birk's she had met an old gentleman who was very polite and wore a decoration. He had induced her to talk a great deal about Madame Autheman and the beans of Saint Ignace.



Ah! scoundrel, this then is the mysterious thing with which you threatened Madame Ebsen! To shut her up in an asylum with mad people, like the husband of the poor woman at the restaurant of Port Sauveur. And all at once, Eline's mother, seized by a terrible fear, the fear of a child who is pursued, turned to Lorie, and clinging to him, cried: "My friend, my only friend! defend me; do not leave me!"

Lorie did his best to reassure her. Of course he would never desert her, and he had now come to take her away. He thought it best that she should conceal herself with some friend, perhaps with Henriette Briss; she was flighty but obliging. It was to be hoped that she had not left Paris.

While he sent for a carriage, Madame Ebsen, who had lost her head as completely as if the house were on fire and the flames crackling under her feet, got together a few things,—a little money, Eline's portrait and her letters. She trembled from head to foot, and panted for breath, though she did not speak one word. The terror redoubled when mother Blot returning with the *fiacre*, told how an individual had been there in the morning and questioned her in regard to her lodger, as to what hour she came in and went out. Lorie interrupted her:

"If that gentleman comes again, you will please say that Madame Ebsen has gone on a little journey."

"Ah! indeed;" and seeing the agitation of the poor lady,—the hastily done up bundle on the floor, the old *concierge* said in a whisper, "Is she going to look for her daughter?"

Lorie, enchanted at this pretext, seized upon it, and nodded yes, with a cautionary finger laid on the lip. In the street, fearing they were watched, for the former Sub-Préfet knew something of the police and its ways, he called to the coachman :

“To the Eastern Station.”

The man with the slowness of a coachman who sees a long journey before him, gathered up the reins and snapped his whip, totally unmoved by Madame Ebsen's impatience. She sat opposite Lorie with her bundle on her knees, while he was no less disturbed and anxious.

He had his reasons for being nervous. That morning when he was in his office, cutting out with a huge pair of tailor's shears, the articles from the day's journals in regard to his Minister, he was summoned to Chemineau's room.

No branch of the duties of the Minister of the Interior is as complicated as that of Public Safety. Things are divided under different heads. *Surveillance of strangers. Search for criminals. Authorization of engravings. Public meetings. Churches. Refugees. Gendarmerie.*

It was probably to the *gendarmes* that Clemineau owed the new expression of his face. His moustache was warlike, and his glasses were glued to his eyes. Lorie-Dufresne was confounded ; he no longer bore the smallest resemblance to the man before him.

“This is a very bad affair,” said the Director. “Yes, to be sure ; you know what I mean—the scandal at the Oratory. You were seen there with that mad woman.”

Lorie protested at this injustice toward his old friend; she was a victim, and had been treated most cruelly.

But the other cut him short:

"She is mad! stark, staring mad! There is a medical certificate which proves it. She is to be placed at Ville Everard at once. As to Aussandon, he has fallen into his dotage, and is to be dismissed within a week; and you, my good fellow, if it were not for our former relations,"—and softened by this recollection, Chemineau planted himself before his old friend, and looking him full in the eyes, scolded him gently.

Wasn't he stupid now? To attack all that was most solid in Paris, the highest and the most respected. Such a fortune as the Authemans had,—one would think that he, as a Sixteenth of May man, might have learned a little wisdom, and if one lesson had not been enough, he and his family would soon be wanting bread again. The unfortunate Sixteenth of May grew paler and paler. He beheld himself copying plans again, and did not recover himself until the Director of Safety dismissed him with this cold phrase:

"If you make another blunder of this kind, I will throw you over!"

During the long drive from the Rue du Val de Grace to Henriette's lodgings on the Rue de Sèvres, Lorie repeated to his friend what had taken place with Chemineau; the impression made upon Lorie was so strong that, involuntarily, he imitated his every tone and gesture. He did not tell Madame Ebsen the concluding phrase of the interview; but he said that

these people were too strong in their position to be attacked with any hope of success.

She was quite willing to believe this now, for the poor creature was nearly annihilated and crushed by the terrible thought that she might be shut up with mad people.

They reached Henriette's just at twilight and ascended the stairs of a large house filled with all sorts of smells, of which the most agreeable by far was the odor of hot bread from the bakery on the first floor, and that of paint and turpentine which came in whiffs from an open door on the second floor. On this door was a sign.

#### MAGNABOS—DECORATOR.

A woman with a youngish air, wearing a large apron with sleeves, and a wet compress bound tightly over her brow, came forward, holding a palette in one hand and a gilder's knife in the other.

"Mademoiselle Briss? She is here. She will be back presently. She went out for her dinner."

A door stood open and showed a long *atelier* where hundreds of small statuettes glittered with gold or were colored for altars.

Henriette's room led from this *atelier*, and the visitors were shown in there.

The disorder of the little room, the unmade bed, piled with newspapers, the open portfolio on the table by the side of the ink-stand, and sheets of paper covered with irregular writing and drops of ink, the

large beads of a rosary hung on a mirror, beneath which was a little St. John with his white lamb, dingy with dust, told the story of this singular life passed within this cell-like room overlooking the court-yard and lighted by the flaming ovens in the baker's cellar.

Opposite the window, not an arm's length away, was a dark wall on which constant drippings from the roof had traced hieroglyphics which were easily deciphered by the initiated, *Sickness, Poverty,—Sickness, Poverty.*

“Ah! Is that you? How very nice to come!”

Henriette now appeared with a loaf of bread and some dish that the baker had cooked for her in his oven.

She offered her room and her bed as soon as she heard the story; Madame Ebsen could sleep on the sofa and might pass for one of her aunts from *Christiania*.

“You will see how comfortable we can be, and what good people these *Magnabos* are. The man is a free-thinker, but he is clever; we have a good many arguments. Then too, there are no children, you know.”

As she talked, she tossed Madame Ebsen's belongings into a drawer of the bureau and lighted her lamp. Then she found among her papers, on the table, another plate and a fork.

Lorie left them eating their dinner, the mother somewhat calmer and feeling herself safe.

Henriette was extremely loquacious and animated, excited less by the events of the day than by the air of Paris, which was far too strong for this unsteady brain.

Paris was also too disturbing for Lorie at this time.

He had never sounded its depths, and as he took his walk after dinner, it seemed to him that the soil on which he trod, was undermined.

Things that one reads, and which are considered so impossible, are nevertheless perfectly probable. He knew that Madame Ebsen was perfectly sane. Would they dare to shut her up in an asylum, or was it a mere threat to keep her quiet?

When he returned to the house, he saw a man seated on the steps. He thought of the man who had called to ask questions about Madame Ebsen and he asked quickly: "Who is that?"

Romain's voice answered, hoarse, low and wretched. Romain in Paris at this hour! What on earth was the matter?

This was his story:

He had received notice that morning that he was removed for irregularities. He hurried at once to the office, believing the dismissal to be a mistake but was unable to obtain any enlightenment.

Irregularities! and Baraquin was to replace him. Would matters be likely to go smoothly then?

Lorie had a name on his lips, but Romain saved him the trouble of pronouncing it.

"All this you see is due to the Authemans, they are bad people."

For some time open warfare had existed between the Château and the lock. And young Nicolas having been daring enough to intrude on the enemies' territory received such a whipping from Sylvanire that he was not able to stir for a week.

She was summoned before the court at Corbeil, but this caused no neglect of his duties by the lock-keeper, who was now fretting less for the loss of his position than at the idea that "they could be no longer together."

The children would go back to Monsieur Lorie, and Sylvanire of course must accompany them. He knew that, and he knew it could not be helped, but all the same—

The clock struck in the tower of Saint-Jacques and as he could not lose his train, Romain started up and hurried away, wiping his eyes as he went.

Madame Ebsen's life at the Magnabos, was very sad and very lonely.

Henriette spent her time visiting different convents, and was much agitated by the famous decrees which were at once to be carried into execution. The poor mother, not daring to go out, moped in this chamber which no care of hers could render habitable, as her turbulent companion came in and went out like a hurricane, ten times in the same day.

How different from that little home in the Rue du Val-de-Grace! Not a thing to do but to decipher the strange, mouldy lines on the wall, "Sickness, Poverty," or to go into her neighbor's *atelier* to spend an hour.

Magnabos was a huge, hairy man, somewhere between thirty-five and fifty, with eyelids like a frog, and a deep, hollow voice. He was quite a celebrity at public meetings, and was wonderful at funeral orations.

There was not an interment in the vicinity at which Magnabos did not make a speech, and as these events

did not occur as often as he desired, he joined a Masons' lodge composed of Free Thinkers, and watched over aged people and the sick, measuring them for a funeral oration as he might have done for a coffin, knowing exactly how to do both.

Then, with an *immortelle* in his buttonhole and passing over his shoulder the broad, blue ribbon of his Lodge, he trudged through the rain, the wind and the hot sun to all the funerals, where, standing on the edge of the grave, he invariably said something.

His language assumed a certain unction, his gestures an authority. Enemy as he was of the Priests, he became a Priest among the Free Thinkers. He followed their ceremonies and was rewarded by good breakfasts at the expense of the relatives, who also paid his travelling expenses, for Magnabos went to Poissy, Mantes and Vernon.

Ah! had these Free Thinkers known the true trade of their Pontiff, how he painted religious emblems and colored all that statuary made of pasteboard and plastic, displayed in certain windows in the Rue Bonaparte and Saint Sulpice. He was obliged to live, you see! Then, too, Magnabos occupied himself very little with his "*Manitous*" as he called them.

The real decorator was his wife. She knew, just as well as he, how to mix the colors and put on the gilding. She was a fair type of the Parisian working woman, her pretty face worn by late hours and atrocious headaches, brought on by the odor of turpentine and paints. Madame Magnabos remained from morning until night and sometimes well into the night, before a procession



of Saints and Madonnas, who came to her with dead eyes, and lips as white as their hair and their draperies, and to which she gave veils, orbs upturned in ecstasy, tunics of various colors, some with bands of gold and others with golden stars scattered over them. Madame Ebsen often took a seat behind her chair, and seemed to be greatly amused by seeing her mix her colors and cut out her gilt leaves, or put her emblems with a light hand on the statuettes saturated with oil and resin.

As she worked, the woman talked of the last discourse of Magnabos at the tomb of one of the brothers, of his success, and of what the journals said of him. He was so good and so kind, she said, even when he had had a glass too much after some great funeral.

As she said this, the brave little woman held her head tight in her left hand and closed her eyes in pain, while she painted the tiara of Saint Ambroise. She wanted but one thing—a child; not a boy, because boys go away, but a little girl that she would have called Mathilde, with curly hair like St. John. She could have had this little girl all day with her in the studio, where she was at times a little lonely.

But there was no use in talking—there must always be something lacking in everybody's life!

"You have never had any children, I believe, Madame?" she said one day, to the pretended aunt of Henriette.

"Yes," answered Madame Ebsen. "A daughter?"

There was no reply. She turned and saw the poor woman all shaken with sobs, and her face buried in her hands.

"That is the reason she is so sad—the reason she will never go out."

And believing that the daughter of this neighbor was dead, Madame Magnabos, from this day, said nothing more about little Mathilde.

The evening brought with it Henriette Briss, and sometimes Magnabos, when there was a good deal of work on hand and there was no meeting which he wished to attend. In the great work-shop, crossed by a many elbowed stove-pipe from a little stove which was red and glowing, although the weather was becoming very mild, in order that the colors might dry more quickly, the big man worked by the side of his pale and slender wife. His hair was well pomaded and combed smoothly to his head; his heavy, black beard was spread out over a long, gray blouse that he filled with the sacerdotal majesty of a Pope. But grave and dignified as he was, he occasionally condescended to joke.

"Come here," he would say to some tiny figure of a Bishop that he planted before him in a comical way, which invariably brought a smile to his wife's lips, and a protest from Henriette.

"Oh! Monsieur Magnabos."

And then the argument began.

The bass voice of the funeral orator, the little thready head voice of the former good Sister, rose and fell. Through the high windows open on the crowded streets, came the roar of omnibuses mingled with the words *Eternity*, *Matter*, *Superstition*, *Sensuality*. Both—the Atheist and the Believer—made use of the same

dictionary, and quoted from the Fathers of the Church or the Encyclopedia—only Magnabos never became excited like Henriette.

He denied, in a lofty manner, the existence of God, while he mixed his chrome yellow, or while his large brush colored the beard of St. Joseph, or the tresses of Saint Perpetua.

Lorie-Dufresne occasionally mingled his soothing voice in this chorus. Having recently turned his attention to Protestantism, his knowledge was fresh, and he expressed it with all the reserve of the administrative language, his condescending intonation exasperating the opposing parties, even while he pretended to calm them.

Seated in a dark corner so that no one need see her weep—as silent and inert as the long rows of little saints showing their resigned faces against the dark background of the wall, Madame Ebsen thought sadly of how little importance were all these differences of religion, since men used them all to pursue their cruel and unjust ends, and as if in a bad dream she heard Magnabos thunder out that good days had come and privileges were at an end.

Magnabos was mistaken.

Old privileges had fallen, but one had remained which was worth them all—a tyranny higher than all laws and all revolutions, and this was Fortune—the true strength of modern days, the lever that lifts unconsciously and without effort.

And the poor mother, obliged to conceal herself like a criminal, and the old Dean dismissed, and good

Romain ignominiously driven from his lock, had no idea of how little heed the Authemans paid to their misfortunes. All that had been done was done by the natural force of things, by the weight of their money, by the universal prostration before the idol; and while these base and cruel acts were done in their name, they continued their honorable, peaceful lives, Madame at Port-Sauveur enjoying the early spring, and the banker behind his grating at the source of the crystal river, continuous and inexhaustible, which sent its golden threads all over the world.

Every day at five o'clock Autheman's *coupé* comes for him, and carries him swiftly toward his wife. Nothing could be more punctual than this departure by which the clerks regulate their watches, and relax their countenances, darkened by the presence of their employer.

Consequently, the surprise was great when one afternoon in June, the banker left his desk at three o'clock.

"I am going up-stairs," he said, as he passed the clerks. "When Pierre comes to the door, send up to tell me."

"You are not ill, sir?"

No, he was not more ill than any other day.

Slowly, with a preoccupied gesture, he rubbed his swollen cheek as he mounted the wide staircase, along which echoed his slow, discouraged footsteps as if in an old church, he enters the room where the blinds are all closed, and to which the absence of rugs and curtains gave a look of unusual size; he crosses the parlor

where the prayer-meetings are held, and where the benches are piled against the walls, covered with Biblical inscriptions. Then he passes through the small cabinet where everything is in order, then the pompous *salon*, furnished in the style of the First Empire—the chairs and sofas draped in linen covers, with something of the short-waisted aspect common to the men and women of that date, and then stops short before a high, carved door.

His wife's room!

For four years this door had been closed upon a happiness which was obstinately refused to him.

At first excuses were made, pretexts in which women are so ingenious; then came a simple, unexplained refusal, and a heavy bolt drawn solidly and firmly in these ancient timbers. He did not protest. But how many times in the dark watches of the night he has frozen in this great *salon* as well as in the corridors of Port-Sauveur, while he listened to the gentle, measured breathing of his Jeanne. He thought "she has had enough of me, it is horror—disgust." And repeating the attempts of his youth, he abandoned his cheek to the surgeons, but the frightful hereditary cancer remained rebellious under all medical treatment. Operations were equally unsuccessful. When supposed to be extirpated, the evil appeared again, more hideous each time, and extended itself like a huge spider over all one side of his face.

Then, seized with a paroxysm of rage, and with a wish to humiliate in his heart that love which would have naught to say to him, Autheman tried profligacy.

But his first attempts in this direction showed him how ill-adapted he was to carry out such a rôle. This refined lover of a chaste woman lacked any initiation into vice. His moral sensibilities had never become sufficiently blunted to render the profligate's career even endurable to him. Then, too, the mercenary creatures who flocked about him at once, attracted by the reports of his vast wealth, could not, adepts though they were in the art of deception, hide from him wholly the repulsive feelings which his hideous deformity awakened.

His course in profligacy was hardly begun before it was ended, and left him still in that state of morbid despair, in which life seemed even more intolerable than before.

The truth was, that to him there was but one woman in the world, his own wife, and she would not listen to him and therefore he had determined to die.

Yes, he craved death, that supreme resource of the wicked, an appalling death, one of those fierce avenging suicides which bespatter with human remains hard stones and iron palings, in which that life which has been too full of cruel sufferings goes out in groans and blasphemies.

It was a death like this that he selected. He meant to kill himself that night and very near her.

But first he wished to see this room once more.

A large chamber it was, hung with silk of a delicate tint of gray ; the woodwork was of the same hue, with here and there a thread of gold. The immaterial ty of the woman who reigned there, might be divined in this coloring and in the furniture, inlaid with mother of

pearl. Everything was as fresh as on their marriage night, eleven years before.

Poor Autheman,—for no one, not even his mother, ever thought of calling him Louis,—the rich Autheman, the poor ugly fellow, threw himself on the bed, and what cries and sobs of anger and passion he stifled there! And who would believe to see him weeping with all the abandonment of a child, that he was the same Autheman, gloved, correct and dignified, that his servant found a little later in the ante-room standing in front of the parrot's cage. Every year the cage and the bird made their journey to Port-Sauveur to the great scandal of Anne de Beuil, who was indignant at hearing the crooked beak of the old heretic form the words, "Moses! Moses!" under the Evangelical shades of Port-Sauveur. This time, whether by accident or intentionally, the parrot had been forgotten, and now he lay on the bottom of the cage with its claws drawn up and its head drawn back, before a little broken mirror that reflected its empty water jar and its seed vessel without food. He would never call Moses again. Nothing of Israel was now left in the house of the renegade.

Autheman stood looking down at the bird for a minute, and then without the smallest evidence of anger, calmly left the room. As he entered his coupé he pulled out his watch and said to his coachman:

"I am in great haste, Pierre."

The coupé dashed through the streets over the Quais and past the dismal Faubourg d'Ivry, where all is black with the coal dust from manufactories, whose chimneys smoke day and night. A wretched *quartier*, where the

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few carriages that pass are splashed with mud and dirty water, and receive handfuls of mire thrown in at the windows. For the banker's coupé was well known to the Ivry people, and he had nothing to fear from them as he drove through, with the curtains of the coupé as closely drawn as if it had been a lazaretto, even when the road turned among field of colza and wheat, bright with the June sunshine. It is in this way that this rich man travels, released only when the gates have opened and he breathes the honeyed odor of the pawlonias floating on the still air of Port-Sauveur.

"Where is Madame?" he asked, while the horse tosses his head with his bits covered with foam.

"At the park, at Gabrielle's seat."

On this mossy, semi-circular seat which connects the two flights of steps above, and is sheltered like a nest by the old linden tree, Gabrielle had heard sweet whispers and tender sighs on evenings like this, amid humming of bees, and these same gusts of warm, fragrant air.

Jeanne Autheman, however, regards it as a simple observatory. When she is not at the Retreat holding communion with God, she can look down from amid these leafy branches on the lawn and flower beds, and on the vast extent of hotbeds glittering in the sunshine.

The servants know this, and when "Madame is in her tree" the Château seems to be even more austere and orderly than at other times.

"The soul that aspires to unite itself with God should forget all created things, all perishable beings."

It was his wife's cold voice speaking these words that the banker heard as he mounted these winding steps.



Watson's sobs answered her; poor Watson had returned from her mission more despairing than ever, with the memory of her children gnawing at her heart.

Jeanne is angry and scolds her. She is totally unmoved by these tears, for she has received from Christ "the gift of strength."

"Good evening," she said to Autheman, lifting her forehead to him quickly that he may press a kiss upon it and depart, for she is anxious to continue her conversation.

But in the tone of a master he says:

"I wish to speak to you, Jeanne."

By the light in his eyes, by the nervous way in which he clasps her hand, she understands that the hour has come for the explanation which she has so long and adroitly postponed.

"Go, my child," she said to Watson, and then sits waiting with that air of mingled weariness and dread which we see on the face of a woman who does not love, and yet who knows that she is to be spoken to of love.

Seated by her side Autheman murmured:

"Why do you take your hand away, Jeanne? Why do you take back what you have once given me—if—if—you understand. Do not look at me with your eyes in that way; you were mine, why have you deserted me?"

Then with impetuous, burning words, he tried to make her understand what she had been in his life.

After a childhood of sickness and solitude, and a joyless youth, when he shrank from allowing the eyes of man or woman to rest upon him, with something

of the atrocious sensation of the loathsome insect that retreats under a stone for fear that it will be crushed, —after all this, she appeared, and with such a blaze of light that he was reanimated. Even his agony when he saw her at Port-Sauveur with Deborah, and when he said to himself, “no, she will never be mine,”—even that was sweet since she was its cause.

“Do you remember, Jeanne, when my mother went to ask you to become my wife? I passed the whole afternoon here in this very spot watching for her return. I was not impatient, I was on the contrary very calm. I said to myself, ‘If she will not take me I shall kill myself,’ and I knew how; all my plans were made, and now look at me; you know I am not a man that talks much; I am again a suppliant, as I was eleven years ago, and equally firm in my determination to die if I am refused. The place and the hour are decided upon. Speak!”

She knew him to be in deadly earnest, and refrained from uttering the “no,” which he nevertheless read in the decision of her eyes, and in the instinctive withdrawal of her whole being.

She gently seeks to remind him of his Christian duties; admonishes him and speaks of God’s law that forbids us to take our own lives.

“God! But you are my God!” he cries, and with kisses rather than words, he protests.

“Your lips, your arms, your white breast, on which I have slept, are all the God I know! In that Temple to which you led me, at my desk with eyes fixed on long columns of figures, I think only of you! You

gave me courage to work; you gave me ardor to pray! And now you have taken yourself from me. How do you expect me to believe? How do you expect me to live?"

She started to her feet, insulted at this blasphemy in her presence. A burning blush mounted to her cheeks: her eyes kindled with holy anger.

"Enough! Not another word; I thought you understood me. God and His work, naught else has any existence for me."

She is very beautiful in her animation, and with the pale blossoms of the linden tree lying on her dark hair, where they have fallen in a careless, becoming disorder.

He looks at her admiringly for a moment, with that strange, sarcastic expression, imparted by the black bandage.

Is it really God and the Work that are the obstacles? Or is it his own appalling ugliness? In any event he knows her,—he knows her well. Her "no" is implacable!

"I felt very sure," he said, moving away a little and speaking in his customary manner, and in his usual cold, steady voice, "I felt very sure that to speak to you on this subject was useless, but I did not wish that any misunderstanding should exist between us." He went toward the steps and stopped.

"Do you mean that never?"

"Never!"

Where was he going, she wondered, as he looked at his watch and moved toward the house, like a man who fears to be late at a rendezvous. Let him go wherever he chooses; God will, unquestionably, chastise this

blasphemer; without giving herself any more uneasiness about him, she sinks on her knees in prayer; she wishes to calm her perturbed spirit, and to wash off the stain that this brutal appeal had left on her soul.

She prays and is appeased. While the evening steals on, great night-moths hover over the geraniums in the garden, instead of the butterflies that were there in the sunshine. But by degrees everything becomes wrapped in darkness, for there is no moon. She can see nothing now but the railway, straight and smooth under the bright light of two huge globes placed in the turning of the Seine.

The Evening Express!

It thunders past; and Jeanne, to whom it is a signal for dinner, begins to descend the steps slowly, reciting as she goes, the last verse of a hymn. Her eyes mechanically follow the Express, without suspecting that it has just made her a widow.

He was found that same evening, when the men went out and signal lanterns were swung to and fro, between trains that were coming and going.

His hat, his cane and his gloves were carefully laid on the stone parapet of the terrace. The body had been frightfully mutilated and thrown in fragments on each side of the track; the head alone was intact, and beyond the protecting band, stretching forth more appallingly than ever, the long claws of the spider, had clutched its prey at last.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WE WILL LOVE EACH OTHER. WE WILL  
NEVER PART.

MADAME EBSEN began to go out a little and to feel more at ease. The d'Arlots had returned to Paris and would protect her if any serious steps were taken to shut her up. It was very necessary that she should be very cautious in what she did, for since the frightful accident that had happened to the banker, the courage and dignity of his widow, her intelligent manner of carrying on the business, were worthy of the daughter-in-law of old Madame Autheman, and had won her a high place in the esteem of the public.

The poor mother, moreover, was reduced by fear and the weary expectation that had lasted for months, into a state of apathy; she was quite ready to say with the peasant woman of Port-Sauveur: "Nothing can be done!"

Not daring to return to Val-de-Grace, she continued to occupy, but alone, Henriette's room. Henriette herself, at the end of her resources, had gone to Podolée, and Madame Ebsen, nearly penniless, was forced to resume her lessons.

This gave her occupation during the day, but the length of the evenings made her almost regret her turbulent friend, especially now that Magnabos was ill.

The funeral orator having taken a chill at a recent

interment, had now a bad, feverish cold, and a hollow cough that shook the little plaster figures on the shelves.

He had been forbidden to speak; and Madame Magnabos, continuing her work, was obliged to submit to the ill-humor of her sick husband, who was angry at the idea of his friends dying and being buried without his assistance.

Sadder and sadder became poor Madame Ebsen as she gazed out on that mouldy wall; she thought persistently of her daughter, now that she no longer feared an insane asylum, and she said to herself all day long and half through the night: "Where is she? What is she doing?" Receiving no more letters she read the old ones over and over again, as well as the postal card, across which she had written, "last letter from my daughter." It seemed to her that even one word, even the signature "Eline," would content her now.

Lorie too was away, he had gone to Amboise, summoned there on business connected with the estate of the Gailletons, who had died within two weeks of each other.

In his absence she went stealthily to see Mother Blot to ascertain if there were any news, but she did not stop, she did not even go up to her apartment nor linger to embrace Maurice and Fanny, who were again in Paris with Sylvanire. A victim again to that fear of being seized, she looked round a dozen times as she hurried through the deserted streets.

One day when she opened the door with her eternal question, "nothing for me, mother Blot?" the woman

rushed to meet her, her withered face convulsed with emotion.

"Yes! yes! Your child is up stairs, she has just come."

Whence came the strength to climb those stairs, to turn the key which was still in the door and to drag herself into the *salon*?

"My child, my little girl!"

She took her in her arms and her tears fell long and softly on the girl's hair, while Eline simply submitted to the embrace, standing so white and cold and thin in her loose waterproof and black straw hat.

"Oh! my pretty little Lina," murmured the mother, drawing back a little that she might see her child better, "they have frightened me so horribly," and then pressing her again to her heart the mother gasped like a man who has just been saved from drowning and drinks in life and air again.

"You shall never leave me again, love, never leave me again!"

Then caressing the girl as she spoke, lest Eline should think she was reproaching her, she told her of her sufferings, of her troubles, and how they had wished to place her in an insane asylum.

"Hush! Hush!" said Eline. "God has permitted me to return to you; let us thank Him without complaining."

"Yes, you are right."

Her child had come back to her, and she forgot all else. Even if the infamous Birk had come in, she would have kissed him on his Judas-like beard.

Think of it! to hear her child's step once more through the house, to have the shutters all open, the sunshine and fresh air coming in; to work with her and put the rooms in order, unpack the trunks and arrange the drawers; and then sit down before the little improvised dinner, with pleasant words and a kiss as they passed each other.

What anger, what revengeful thoughts could stand before such anticipations?

From the garden, full of golden light from the setting sun, came the gay voices of the little Lories, who amused themselves exploring the pastor's garden ever since they had discovered a huge placard with "To Let." But Eline never thought of them, nor even distinguished their voices from the twittering of the sparrows in the trees, and Madame Ebsen did not dare to speak of the past lest she should shatter this fragile and surprising joy.

She longed, however, to speak of the Dean. Poor man! What a heartache it must have given him when he was torn from this peaceful home, from this garden he had planted, his dear roses and his old cherry tree, the fruit of which he himself plucked—fruit covered with the black dust of Paris, and which he washed and carefully wiped before it was placed on the table.

But Madame Ebsen could not restrain herself, and finally spoke of the Pastor's new home somewhere in the Provinces, living with one of their married children, until he could find a modest *cure* and renew the privations of his early years.



And all this only because he had ventured to raise his voice against cruelty and injustice.

"Ah! Linette, if you had only heard him in the Temple. How magnificent it was, and how near we all felt to God. Ah! child, you should have come home sooner."

And fearing that she had vexed Eline, she took the girl's hand, which she gently kissed. Eline made no reply, but sat *distrain*, looking very weary and white.

The mother thought, "it is her journey," but nevertheless began to question her, curious to know where her child had been; but she elicited no information from Eline's vague, embarrassed replies.

At Zurich, she had been ill for a month. She had done much good at Manchester. And from time to time she uttered a Biblical phrase—a pious exhortation.

"Let us suffer in Christ, mother, and we will reign with Him."

And the mother said: "Oh my pretty little Lina, they have nearly killed me!"

Lina retired very early to her little chamber, alleging her fatigue, while Madame Ebsen sat up very late, eager to bring order into her little home and resume all their old ways. She would stop short every few minutes in her arrangements, with a delicious sense that peace had returned to her—that she was no longer alone, after so many hours of despair and solitude.

The street was very quiet, and over the trees in the gardens came the solemn sound of the bell of Saint Jacques du Haut Pas, mingled with gusts of dance music from Bullier's, where a student's ball was going

on. Not a sound came from Eline's room; but her lamp was still burning.

"She must have forgotten to put it out," thought Madame Ebsen, as she entered very softly.

The young girl was kneeling in the centre of the floor, her head thrown back and her arms extended with a rigid gesture of invocation. At the sound of the door, she said, coldly, without turning:

"Leave me with God, mother."

The mother rushed forward, and embraced her child passionately.

"No, no, my beloved child, do not be angry."

Then suddenly releasing Eline, she fell on her knees with all the weight of her stout form.

"Let me pray with you!" she cried. "Cry aloud unto the Lord! Tell Him all I ought to say!"

When the sun shone upon this house, each floor shared its blessed light; would it be the same with happiness?

Two days after Eline's arrival, Madame Ebsen received a letter from Lorie, announcing that he was sole heir of the Gailleton cousins. He meant to sell the house, but the vineyard and cottage he should retain, and place Romain, Sylvanire and the children there.

He was writing in the room where his beloved wife died; the windows looked out on the tower of the Château. Maurice would continue his studies for *Navale* at the school of Amboise. Poor fellow, he was a victim to the *Borda*.

When he had given all his news, Lorie-Dufresne added:

"You have found your child. I think, in this great joy which has come to you, that if there were any for me you would have written. Nevertheless, I wish you to know and also to tell her, that my heart has not changed, and that the little ones are still motherless."

"And this is the letter sent in return by Madame Ebsen, with its tender ingenuity and odd phrases:

"LORIE, MY FRIEND, it is my child and it is not my child. She is gentle and submissive, ready to comply with all my wishes, but cold, indifferent and strange. It is as if something were broken within her. It is her heart, you see, that has ceased to move. Sometimes I take her in my arms, I hold her close against me to warm the poor shivering creature. I say to her with sobs and tears, 'But my child, I have nothing in the world but you, and what is life if we do not love each other any more?' She does not reply, or she tells me that we must love each other in God, and that the salvation of our souls should be our only care. She herself gives no heed to anything else, and she passes all her time in prayers and in edifying reading.

"The first day, she went to call on some of our friends and showed herself everywhere, but now she goes nowhere and makes no allusion to resuming her lessons. I do not know what she means to do, and in the meantime I try to do the work of two, but I have grown twenty years older since she left me!

"As to yourself, I have no cheering news to give you. When your letter arrived, I went for Fanny,

whom she had not then seen. I hoped to melt her heart with the sweetness of the child, her pretty little ways and the flaxen hair she so loved to smooth. Well, Fanny was received as if she had been an absolute stranger, with one of those icy kisses that she bestows on me, and she at once began to talk of God and the necessity of the Holy Gospel, while the poor little soul trembled with fear and clung to my skirts.

"Nevertheless, I have not lost all hope of curing my daughter of this frightful malady which prevents her from loving any one, but it is a work of time and of tenderness. Last night I was weeping as I lay on my bed, for it is a sad thing to lose a child who is still living. I hushed my own sobs to listen; it seemed to me that I had heard a sob from Eline's room. I rose and ran to her. She was not asleep and there was no light.

"'What is the matter, darling?' I asked.

"'Nothing, nothing at all,' was her reply.

"But when I kissed her, I felt that her cold cheeks were covered with tears.

"Ah! my friend, is there anything sadder than this mother and this daughter weeping with the darkness between them? Any way, she wept and that is much, it shows that her heart is slowly reviving, and if she turns to me again, she will turn to you and your children."

It was on the 15th day of July, about three weeks after Eline's return to her mother; Madame Ebsen had been to say farewell to one of her pupils, and then went on to ask after Magnabos.

"Ill, very ill," answered the orator hoarsely from the depths of his arm-chair; and then turning with difficulty toward his wife, whose tears were watering the blue robe of Saint Regobert:

"Above all, I beg that there shall be no oration pronounced over my tomb. There is not one man who knows how to speak it."

Then becoming excited over the *fête* of the previous day, he said:

"You saw it, did you, Madame Ebsen? Was it very fine?"

"Yes, I believe so, but I saw very little, only from a distance. Lina did not care to go out."

Magnabos was very indignant at this.

"Not care to go out! But it is one especial *fête*, the *fête* of the people, the end of superstitions and privileges. In the name of thunder what do you mean?"

"My friend! my friend!" cried poor Madame Magnabos, fearing that her husband would bring on an attack of bleeding at the lungs.

And with her entreating eyes she sent Madame Ebsen away, who returned home through streets still decorated with flags and emblems, and with garlands of leaves all dripping with rain.

Was it the sight of this dying man, the grief of his brave wife, or the sadness of the day? Madame Ebsen could not have said, but she was strangely uneasy, and her limbs seemed without strength to bear her home through the wet streets and heavy air.

The Luxembourg seemed endless and desolate in the

